

WHERE'S THE FRUIT?

(Philippians 1:9-11)

Series: "Philippians: The Joyful Letter" (Part 5)

- ...Many years ago the Wendy's Restaurant advertised using a woman who exclaimed, "Where's The Beef?" This highly successful ad caught on in the popular culture and people everywhere were asking "Where's the...?"
- ...This throw back memory is helpful with today's text teaching us that God has not only saved us to be free from judgment and to enjoy heaven forever when we die. But more, God is determined to have fruit, spiritual fruit produced in our lives. We are to do good works so that Christ might be glorified and that many might be brought to faith in Him. It is good for us to ask ourselves, "Where's the fruit?" "The unexamined life is not worth living."
- ...Paul writes to his friends at the church in Philippi and tells of his prayer for them. His love and concern has led to his prayers even while in prison. Paul prays for their spiritual maturity so that their lives would be filled with all kinds of spiritual fruit. God wants productive children. He wants your life to be fruitful with good works.

THREE NECESSITIES REQUIRED FOR US TO HAVE LIVES THAT ARE FILLED WITH SPIRITUAL FRUITFULNESS.

...Paul prays these three things for his friends. Some call these the "Secret of having spiritual fruit."

I. The First Thing We Need For Fruitfulness Is Love. (vv.9-10)

...The Christian must be filled with Christ's love. Two descriptions are given:

- A. Paul begins his prayer asking the Lord to give them a "Love that abounds more and more in knowledge and insight." Two descriptions are given:
1. It is an abounding love. It is an overflowing love...for all. (God, Christians, the lost...)
 2. This overflowing love is more than a mere sentimental love...it is knowledgeable and discerning. This knowledge is gained through the study of God's wonderful Word.
...This love has a genuine knowledge of God and His ways that enable us to love the Lord and others more. It understands the principles of the Word.
- B. Furthermore, this overflowing love must be discriminating. We are to discern what is best.
1. Some things are clearly good or bad. Others things are not so easy to determine.
 2. The ability to distinguish is a mark of maturity. "Not all helping is helpful..."
 3. The word used for "testing" is a word that was used to detect counterfeit money, one would test the metal of a coin and approve it's genuineness.
...This is God's wisdom provided for us in the Bible. See the book of Proverbs...
...A maturing love should not only ask, "Is it harmful?", but "Is it helpful?"

Our lives must be motivated and informed by love. Without love we are only clanging symbols... (1 Cor. 13)

II. Next, We Need Pure Lives Free Of Obstructions To Be Fruitful. (v.10b)

...Paul prays for a mature Christian character, "Sincere and without offense."

- A. The word Paul used for "pure" is the word used for "oven tested." (sun-tested)
1. This does not mean we must be perfect, for none of us is.
 2. But it does mean that our lives must be open before God and before others. There must be no hypocrisy. (The ancient world, the biggest industry was pottery...and honest pottery dealers marked their finer products by the caption "sine-cera"...without wax. No fakery...the real deal warts and all. Genuine.

- B. Paul tells us that that the flaws in our lives as believers must not be covered up with wax. Our lives are not perfect. In this life we will always have flaws, but we must not disguise them artificially. We must be sincere. Hypocrisy will stop the flow of fruitfulness.

III. Finally, The Result Of Living In His Love and Purity Produces Fruitfulness. (v.11)

...The goal in view is the finish line, the day of Christ, when every believer will stand before Christ and give an account of his deeds. (2 Cor. 5:10) This sobering and joyous prospect should have a...

- A. Transformed lives are the demonstration that God works in believers. We are His project.
- B. What is this "fruit of righteousness?" It is surely the "Fruit of the Spirit," but more. The fruit of righteousness is the fruit that righteousness produces. This is to be seen in the innumerable acts of kindness and service to which every believer in Jesus is called.

How does this happen? Jesus: "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it...abide in Me." The secret to fruitfulness: Live in close sweet daily fellowship with Jesus.

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN MY LIFE?

1. If God has saved you from your sins, He is determined to make you and your life fruitful so that Christ would be glorified in you. Set your heart on loving and living close to Jesus every day (abiding in Him) and your life will be a harvest of fruit. The secret is to love the Lord Jesus with all your heart, soul, and strength. If you do this, then He will produce the fruit in and through you.
2. Remember the finish line, it is the day of Christ when we will stand before Him and He will review our works. Let this day be a day of great joy, not a day of great regret. Daily ask the Lord to use you for His work...and He will use you to be a blessing and a joy to those near you. Jesus will love others through you.
3. Impurities in your character will certainly hinder your fruitfulness. Ask the Lord to examine your heart and then confess and forsake the sins that obstruct the work of Christ through you. Learn to despise hypocrisy, resist role-playing, and strive for integrity.
4. Today Jesus is calling you to receive Him as Savior and Lord. Have you bowed at the cross to confess and repent of your sins? If not, would you pray that the Lord would open your heart and show you your need for salvation?