



RBC Zoom Connect Study 3/12/2020

Flourishing Spirituality Devotions Part 8

Outworking of Healthy Rhythms - The Fruit of the Spirit

Recently I have been checking our fruit trees, some of which have not been that fruitful in recent years. A few months ago, we fertilized them and have been watering them well. It is exciting to see some signs of peaches, healthy plum and blueberry trees but disappointing about the lack of lemons, despite lots of attention! On the veggie front, tomatoes are flowering, beans are prolific, silver beet is out of control, pumpkins are growing from compost and the rhubarb is healthy. Stewed apple and rhubarb just hit the spot! Fruitfulness is what we look for when we plant fruiting plants.

Jesus said, 'By their fruit you will recognise them!' (Matthew 7:16) i.e. you can tell what a person is like by the fruit of their lives.

Paul reminds the Galatians,

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.
(Galatians 5:22-25)

The context of this passage describes a battle going on in the lives of followers of Jesus. We can choose to walk and live according to the Holy Spirit's leading or gratify our own selfish desires. The fruit of a person's life identifies their allegiance.

To be led by the Spirit is to change and grow to be like Jesus. Walking with Jesus, working with him, watching how he does things, pitilessly resolving to have nothing to do with idols, selfish desires or pseudo saviours, welcoming the Holy Spirit to have the run of our lives, learning the unforced rhythms of grace, sees the Holy Spirit producing amazing and irresistible fruit.

In his book on Galatians, Tim Keller says that by using the term *fruit* Paul identifies four things about the way the Spirit works:

1. Christian growth is **gradual** like development of fruit. You never see it happening, but you see the difference over time as you respond more appropriately than maybe a year earlier. The Spirit has been at work.
2. Growth of the Spirit's fruit is **inevitable**. It will burst through!
3. The Spirit's fruit has **internal roots**. It is more than traits or characteristics. Apples on a tree are a sign of life but they do not give it life.
4. Fruit of the Spirit is **symmetrical**. In using the singular 'fruit' rather than the plural, 'fruits', Paul describes fruit that grows together as the Spirit works. Our temperament may mean we are stronger naturally in one aspect than another.

Questions for conversation:

1. Take a few moments to paraphrase and write in your own words the descriptions of the fruit of the Spirit outlined in Galatians 5:22-23.
2. *Seasoling* our garden enhances root growth, deals with pests, and stimulates flowering and fruiting. Check Galatians 5:24-25 for three clues from Paul about factors that enable the fruit of the Spirit in our lives.
3. Spend a few moments reflecting on whether, not only do you have the Holy Spirit but whether the Holy Spirit has all of you. Talk with God and maybe some others about your reflection.

Every encouragement as you invite the Spirit to keep filling you, prompting you and producing fruit in and through you against which there is no law! May there be many reminders of Jesus in your life.

Blessings,

Bill

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