

Revisiting the Documents of the New Testament (2)

Lesson #12

Scripture: Matthew 7:17-20 *“So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 "A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 " Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 "So then, you will know them by their fruits.”*

Introduction:

Clovis Chappell, a nineteenth century minister, used to tell an interesting story about two paddleboats. The two boats, powered by coal, left Memphis about the same time, traveling down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. As they traveled side-by-side, sailors from one vessel made some critical remarks and jokes about the snail's pace of the other boat. Heated words were exchanged between the men on the two boats.

Challenges were made. So the race began. The competition was hot and heavy as the two boats roared through the Deep South. Eventually, one boat began falling behind. The problem: it didn't have enough fuel. There had been plenty of coal for the trip, but not enough for a race. As the boat dropped back, an enterprising young sailor took some of the ship's cargo and tossed it into the boat's ovens. When his fellow sailors saw that the supplies burned as well as coal, they fueled their boat with the material they had been assigned to transport.

Guess what? They ended up winning the race. But they burned their cargo. HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO OUR LIVES? The men on the winning boat did what they liked, which was winning the race. But the price for that victory was expensive. The boat's cargo, the very reason they were traveling down the river in the first place, was sacrificed. So they failed to do what they ought to have done, which was to safely transport their cargo.

Transitional Statement:

You may not have thought about it, but God has entrusted each of us with cargo. Our cargo is other people, such as friends and family, and the ability He has given us to help someone else. We are responsible for this cargo, and ought to cherish it in our journey through life. However, like the men on the winning boat, often we fail in that responsibility. As Billy Graham says, "We hurt people by being too busy. Too busy to notice their needs. Too busy to drop that note of comfort or encouragement or assurance of love. Too busy to listen when someone needs to talk. Too busy to care." Are you too busy to care? When opportunities occur to help others, do you take advantage of those opportunities? Or do you burn your cargo as you busily do what you like?

Be diligent, and do what you ought to do. Slow down for the needs of your family and friends. Seize opportunities to help people when it is within your power to do so. Finally, remember one other cargo God has entrusted to you. It is the Good News of Jesus Christ. Diligently share that Good News with others, and help people who are using their gifts for Christ reach even more people. Your diligence with the cargo God has given you will be very rewarding.

Lesson:

I. The fruit of Love

A. Agape is the Greek word for love here

1. It defines a love that is benevolent and not self focused.
2. A love that reaches out to others
3. A love that is patient, kind and bearing all things 1 Cor 13
4. A love that helps widows and orphans James 1:27
5. A love that puts others interest ahead of your own Phil 2:3-4
6. A love that is sacrificial and would lay down its life for a friend.
7. This kind of love never fails....where other kinds give way

II. The fruit of Joy

A. Joy is more than a feeling...it is a state of mind.

1. Jesus found Himself joyful in view of the cross that brought Him much pain and suffering, because he understood its overall accomplishment. Heb 12:2
2. God cares about our state of mind as well.
 - a. A godly state of mind, finds joy in all circumstances because through the Spirit we have learned to look through spiritual eyes. James 1:2

B. Joy looks for possibilities seeing potential at every corner

C. Joy is not circumstantial

1. Joy is the welling up of the soul in the presence of the creator.

D. Joy is God's choice for us

1. John 17:13 *"But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves."*

III. The fruit of Peace

A. Jesus is called the Prince of Peace Isaiah 9:6

1. Peace here is not just some inward feeling or state of being
2. Here peace represents reconciliation to God

- a. You see, in the life of a Christian, Jesus has stood in the gap between God and man ushered peace between them.
- B. And the Spirit as He moves in our lives with this peace that surpasses all understanding Phil 4:7, we are moved to share this peace with others.
- C. God also directs us to preserve and protect that peace between ourselves Eph 4:3

IV. The fruit of Patience

- A. Patience means holding in check the strong desire for immediate results
- B. Each person is created differently.
 - 1. We all grew up differently
 - 2. We have all had different life experiences.
 - 3. And we all make changes in different ways.
 - a. One person is tactile....having to get his hands on something to figure it out.
 - b. While another has to first understand the theory or concept.
- C. Patience is allowing God to work at his pace
- D. Patience is trust in God.
- E. Patience is one of the deepest cares we can have for others.
- F. God is patient with us !

V. The fruit of Kindness

- A. Kindness is something often missing in our world.
- B. In many ways we live in a society of self
- C. But God calls us to a frame of mind that moves beyond human thought
 - 1. A frame of mind that sees good in everyone.
 - 2. A frame of mind that can't help but stop and help a person lying in the ditch of life....like the good Samaritan Luke 10
 - 3. This type of thinking understands the value of each person before God.
 - 4. And takes seriously any part they might have in helping.
- D. Kindness doesn't pour forth from obligation
 - 1. Kindness wells up from the roots of spirituality....given by the Spirit.

VI. The fruit of Goodness

- A. Here we are talking about uprightness of heart and life.
- B. Characteristics:
 - 1. Good giver
 - 2. Servant heart
 - 3. Cares deeply for others
 - 4. Passionate for God.

VII. The fruit of Faithfulness

- A. Firmly persuaded or convicted about God
 - 1. Knowing who we have believed in and convinced 2 Timothy 1:12
 - 2. Not being hung up on what the eye can see
 - 2 Corinthians 4:18 *“while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”*
 - 3. But convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt that God will provide our every need.
 - 4. Knowing that He is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine Eph 3:20
- B. You can't buy faith on a street corner, or even conjure it up in your mind. It comes only from the Spirit of God through His word Romans 10:17

VIII. The fruit of Gentleness

- A. Gentleness here has to do with the way we handle information
 - 1. Are we reactive to situations
 - 2. Moved by our emotions
 - 3. Careless in our responses
- B. Spirituality moves us to be mild or even tempered.
 - 1. Giving careful thought to our response
 - 2. Considering all aspects
 - 3. Thinking about eternity
- C. Proactive....not reactive.

IX. The Fruit of Self Control

A. Comes out of a full surrender to God.

1. Humility

1 Peter 5:6 *“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,”*

B. Taking every thought captive....2 Cor 10:5

C. Making God more important than our desires Matthew 16:24

Conclusion:

Galatians 5:24-26

24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.”