

Grow Upward Bearing the Fruit of the Spirit (III) Աճել՝ Հոգիից Պտուղներով

Galatians 5:22-26

“Fruit is the result of a long organic and living process. The process is complex and intricate. Fruits are not something made, manufactured or engineered. They are not the product of the drawing board. They are not the invention of a genius. They are not the product of a sophisticated technology. They are the result of a life of faith created by God.”¹

We are in the process of **growth**. We are growing in all directions. Through Galatians 5, we are studying the process of bearing the fruit of the Spirit, which comes in 9 flavors. In the previous sermons we covered **Love, (agape), Joy (chara), and Peace (eirene)**.

-Patience: literally means to "put anger far away."

The Greek word for patience is *Makrothumia*. “**Makros**”, which means “**long**”; and “**thumia**”, which means “**passion**” or “**wrath**.” Someone translated it as, **Long fuse. Not easily angered or upset.** In fact, **you decide to wait and not retaliate.**

Makrothumia is “forbearance and long-suffering toward those who aggravate and persecute us, not pushing for a result or resolution.”²

Eugene Peterson’s definition is: “the freedom to stay with something or someone, not hurrying, not rushing for a result.”

Last Sunday I gave the cure: “I give up, I surrender, I leave it to God, I let go...”

There is a great verse in the Psalms about being still:

“Be still, and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10)

The expression “be still” has many meanings in Hebrew, **such as be quiet, relax, sink down, and let go.**

“Let go, release, relax, and know I am God. I rule over nations...”

I need long patience to experience this. Also I need patience not to be aggravated quickly and retaliate. Relax, wait, be still, make a decision to postpone your response of anger.

Patience is one of the attributes of God:

In the Bible Makrothumia is a word commonly used describing an attribute of God. Our God has patience. He does. He is patient with me. How about with you?

What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction... (Romans 9:22, ESV)

because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. (1 Peter 3:20, ESV)

But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. (1 Timothy 1:16, ESV)

Patience is the “antivirus” for the works of the flesh, such as: “But if you bite and devour one another,(15) fits of anger, rivalries, (20), Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (26)

-Let us move on to the next flavor: ***Kindness, (sweetness)(chrestotes)***

Kindness and goodness are closely connected words. But before we go further in those words, let me return for a moment to the previous fruit. **Patience** is withholding anger or wrath; **kindness** is giving something that is contrary to what we receive.³ We find these words close to each other in 1 Corinthians 13: “**Love is patient and kind.**” If patience helps you **to delay your anger**, your retaliation, keeps your mouth from speaking, gives you a “long fuse,” then **with kindness you act with compassion and love**, and your behavior will be sweet and gentle.

Christ's yoke is gentle, easy, and sweet (Matthew 11:30). Here the word is the same, *chrestotes*.

-The next flavor is *Goodness. (agathosune)*

This word is related with the first. The word Paul uses for goodness is ***agathosune***. Goodness is working for the benefit of others.⁴ However, **without kindness goodness can sometimes be harsh and rebuking.** We may sometimes try to do goodness but not in a kind way. **Goodness should be manifested in active kindness.**

In our daily conversations, I often hear, "He is a good person; I am a good person, etc." In the Bible there is an incident where a young man came to Jesus and asked: "Good teacher (Rabbi) what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" Mark 10:17

Jesus replied: "Why do you call me good? No one is good but One, that is, God."

Only God is good. God is good, and He acts in goodness. When we practice goodness it takes the form of "doing good." So we also are called to learn from God, and follow His example of goodness. Remember, this fruit only appears as result of surrendering to God and allowing to Holy Spirit to transform our character.

Over 250 years ago John Wesley said:

"Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can."

Eugene Petersen describes goodness as

"the freedom to see and respond to life in terms of its good creation rather than in terms of its willful rebellion."⁵

I see this in the parable of the **Good Samaritan**. He stopped, he got out of his comfort zone, he saw the evil that people had done (willful rebellion), then he

acted in goodness and kindness. This is what we learn from Jesus. This is an attribute of God.

Let's move on to the next flavor of the fruit of the Spirit:

-Faithfulness (pistis):

Having a faithful person in your daily relationships is essential, like having a faithful person in your work place, **someone that you can trust, someone who is loyal, someone who will not change and is reliable.**

Faithfulness can be learned from God. God is faithful in His promises.

You see God is slow in His anger; He is patient. He waits, and does not push Himself on us. He is faithful to us even when we abandon Him. God wants to have a long-term relationship with us; let us call it **loyal love "hesed."**

-Next, Gentleness, Meekness (praotes)

Barclay explains three interpretations according to the NT:

A. It means being submissive to the will of God

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for **I am gentle (Praotes)** and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is **easy (chrestotes)**, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:29-30, ESV)

B. It means teachable

Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

(James 1:21)

Someone who will be teachable if has the humility to learn: "being good".

C. It means being considerate

What do you wish? Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness? (1 Corinthians 4:21, ESV)

I, Paul, myself entreat you, by the meekness and gentleness of Christ—I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away!— (2 Corinthians 10:1, ESV)

I urge you walk in.....with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:2 ESV)

Aristotle defined *praotes*, the quality of the man who is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time. The adjective of this word is *praus*, which is used for a tamed animal.⁶

This leads me to the final word, **Self-Control**; the word is obvious. Control yourself. The word is unique. It does not appear in Scripture elsewhere. The word is clear, **to use one's energy wisely**. Lately losing weight is one of my disciplines. All the energy that I have for appetite, I use it wisely. I cook the right food, I exercise, and more.... I need to restrain my appetite. There is no other way to lose weight.

Here are the nine flavors of the fruit of the Spirit. It starts when we are freed from sin, the self, the “flesh”, the old life. We are freed to love, to care, to live under the control of Holy Spirit, to produce fruit, more and more.

Three observations:

1. The Fruit of Spirit can be manifested in your relationships. Are you connected to people? Do you have a community? Do you have a small group that you are plugged in?

In the Bible, 58 times we find the phrase **one another**. Love **one another**, greet **one another**, care **one another**, help **one another**, encourage **one another**, serve **one another**

You cannot fulfill God's plan by yourself. The Fruit of Spirit will be manifested in the church, in the community, in the kingdom of God....

2. If you live a life of faith, the fruit of Spirit will appear in your life. Sometimes it appears in places that you did not anticipate. God works in mysterious ways.

Peterson says: "There is far more to our lives that we bring to them. Fruit is the appropriate metaphor. We do not produce it by our effort. We do not purchase it from another. It is not a reward for doing good deeds....Fruits are simply there."⁷

3. The fruit is perishable. When we buy fruit, it should be eaten. If you leave it without use it will perish. Fruit of the Spirit will help us to use our gift in a creative way. All the flavors of the fruit help us not to be self-centered. They help us to be creative in putting in action all our gifts for His glory. The opposite is the flesh. All the works of the flesh make us unproductive, self-centered and eventually miserable.

Application.

1 Look around you. Do you see the any fruit of Sprit in people around you? Share with them the blessing. Encourage them.

2 Which flavor do you think people see in you? Which of this 9 flavors you lack. Why?

3 Allow the Sprit of God to mold you and transform you so the fruit of the Sprit will be manifested in you.

Go and grow upward

1 Eugene Peterson, *Traveling Light* P 165

2 John Hanneman The Freedom to Say Yes May 21st, 1995

3 ibid.

4 ESV Commentary

5 Eugene Peterson, *Traveling Light* P 166

6 William Barclay, *The Daily Study Bible: Galatians* P 51-52

7 Eugene Peterson, *Traveling Light* P 166