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Welcome to the last session of spiritual fruit and gospel fiber. I hope you've enjoyed this half as much as I have. As we come to this last session, let me give you just one last recap. We looked at, first of all, the freedom that we have in Christ—freedom *from* sinful desires, *from* legalism; freedom *to* walk according to the Spirit; freedom *to* be imitators of God; freedom *to* be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. And the next session we looked at not just the freedom, but the power that we have. Christ not only came to forgive us, but He came to free us. And by doing that, He gave us the power of the Spirit. So if we walk by the power of the Spirit, not by our own might, then we can live a holy life. Then we can produce the fruit of the Spirit.

But then we went to the third session, and we talked about war, that there is still a war going on. It's not that we have it easy, but we have to fight this war. But the good news is that because we have the Spirit, we no longer live according to those sinful desires and that age that was marked by our sins and things that we were ashamed of. In the last session, we looked at the fruit, that is what all of Galatians is leading us to. The freedom is so that we can exhibit the fruit of the Spirit and this is something that is a natural by-product of us walking according to the Spirit.

Well, we finally come to the culmination of this. The fruit of the Spirit is not individual, but instead it is meant to be corporate. I grew up in a tradition that would focus on, "Do I specifically have love? Do I specifically have self-control?" Which again is good, but we take this out of context. In the Western world, we're very individualized. So that's usually the question we ask. "I want to do my quiet time every day so that I can have gentleness." But again, it's not so that I can have gentleness, but so that I can be a part of a church that's marked by this fruit of the Spirit.

In a previous session, I talked about how Martin Luther would

**Galatians 5**

Author's Translation

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**Galatians 6**

Author's Translation

<sup>1</sup>Brothers and sisters, if a certain person is caught in a specific trespass, those of you <sup>→ who walk according to the Spirit</sup> who are spiritual, restore this person. And do it in a spirit of gentleness, watching out for yourself

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*Who is at the bottom of **your** cross?*

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say, “I realize now in the gospel of Jesus Christ that I don’t have to answer the door anymore. Instead, I can shut the door and I can put a guard at the door.” But what we’re going to see today is that we can have a guard at the door, but not only just the guard at the door, but Paul’s going to say that we need to have someone to help us crucify that flesh that’s there.

So if you have your Bibles, pick them up and let’s look at Galatians 5, verse 24, and we’re going to go down to chapter [5], verse [24]. Paul says, “But those who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh along with its passions and desires. Since, or if, we live with, by, according to the Spirit, then we are led by, we keep in step with the Spirit.” Verse 26, “Therefore no longer be vainglorious, no longer have selfish ambition, no longer backbite or try to devour one another, no longer be envious of one another. Chapter 6, verse 1, “Brothers and sisters, if a certain person is caught in a specific trespass, those of you who are spiritual, who walk according to the Spirit, restore this person, and do it in a spirit of gentleness, watching out for yourself and not bearing it all by yourself, lest you fall into temptation. And by doing this, you fulfill the law of Christ.” The Word of the Lord, let it be imprinted on our minds, impressed upon our minds, implanted in our hearts and ever upon our lips.

Paul’s going to say, “I want to remind you that you belong to Christ. And those who belong to Christ crucify their flesh along with its passions and desires.” Now, again, we move from the individual to the corporate. You can’t crucify yourself. You maybe can nail down one arm, but the other one needs some help. So again, Paul reminds us that this is not *you* singular, but as we would say in Texas, this is a y’all—you all crucify your flesh. As we see in the Gospels, that when the Romans would crucify someone, they would often, if not always, post a soldier at the bottom of the cross. And that soldier’s job was to make sure that whoever was on that cross didn’t come down until they were dead. Think about the soldiers, breaking the feet, the legs of the criminals beside Jesus and stabbing Him in the side to make sure that He was dead. When Paul says, “It’s time for you to crucify your flesh along with its passions and desires,” he’s also asking, I think, “Who’s at the bottom of your cross? Who is it that you’ve stationed in your life and in your church that makes sure that you don’t come down from that cross until your anger has been destroyed?” You don’t come down from that cross until your self-absorbed self-centeredness comes down. You don’t come down from that cross until your words

of bitterness has been crucified and is dead. For many of us, we climb up on a cross, but we don't have anyone stationed there.

So Paul says, "For those who belong to Christ, as they walk according to the Spirit, God has given us the hammer." Now we know that Paul is going to say that Jesus Christ has been crucified for us. We'll know that Paul will come and say, "I've been crucified with Christ. I no longer live, not I, but Christ who lives within me," but here, Paul's going to say, "Now it's time for you—because we've been crucified with Christ—to crucify your own flesh." He even ends the letter by saying, "Don't give me any harm. I bear on my body the marks of Jesus Christ. And I want you to know that by the cross I've been crucified to the world and the world has been crucified to me." And so here we see the fruit of the Spirit can only happen through community.

As we talked in that first session, God's given us three provisions so that we can produce the fruit of the Spirit. He's given us the life of Jesus Christ, the gospel. He's given us the power of his Holy Spirit, but He's also given us His body, the body of Christ; we can't do this by ourselves. So for Paul, the fruit of Spirit is to be exhibited in the community that's marked by unity. If we look at verse 25, "Since, or if, we live by the Spirit," Some of your translations may be *if*, some of them may be *since*. This is a Greek construction, if you will, that says "*If*, and surely you are—right? Right? Right?" Maybe a word between *if* and *since* that we don't have today—*sniff*, *sniff*, you are led by, or with, the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit."

Paul is reminding us that the fruit of the Spirit comes by us relying on and keeping in step with the Spirit. And again, just another reminder that this is about community. When we walk by the Spirit, this is what we're not going to be doing: We're not going to have selfish ambition. We're not going to be hurting one another. We're not going to be jealous and envious of others. And then Paul's going to give us a hypothetical situation that may not be hypothetical. Look at chapter 6, "Brothers and sisters, if a person is caught in a trespass," here, Paul is reminding us that there's still sin in the church and there's still that war going on. And some individuals may fall. And if that's the case, then those of you who are spiritual should restore this brother or sister.

Now, it's interesting because we often take "those who are spiritual" as the pastors, as the elders of our church, but here

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καταρτίζω – katartizō

To mend what has been broken  
watching out for yourself

coming from the fruit of the Spirit, this is not your pastor holding someone accountable. This is not your elder group holding someone accountable, but instead, this is the body of Christ holding each other accountable. Those who are marked by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, and self-control, those are the ones who are spiritual. And so, Paul reminds us that, “Every once in a while we fall and we need each other.” This word *restore* is interesting. It could be the idea of, having a net that is broken and you need to mend that net. Often it was used in the ancient world of setting a bone. If a person had a broken bone, and if someone didn’t set that bone, then the person would limp for the rest of their days. So, even though it was painful, you had to restore the bone. There are a lot of people in our churches today that because those who are spiritual haven’t followed this, because we haven’t allowed the fruit of the Spirit to bring us to that community, there are a lot of churches today that are limping on because they’ve never allowed that person to be restored.

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Paul is going to say, “Restore this,” but notice *how* we restore each other. We do this gently. We don’t restore them because they embarrassed us. We don’t hit them hard to restore them out of punishment, but instead we restore them gently. This word *gently*, it takes us back again to the fruit of the Spirit, because one of the fruits of Spirit is gentleness. We do this knowing that our brother or sister may be down now, but the next time it may be us.

Thirdly, Paul’s going to say that we do this watching out, lest we fall into temptation. This could be that we fall into the same temptation that they fell in. But I think it probably means this idea of being prideful to think that we’re above and beyond. Paul realizes that as soon as we bring pride in, then we let flesh and the enemy back into our lives. We have to watch out as we set each other’s bones, if you will.

And then notice how Paul ends this. I love it. He says, “And by doing this, we fulfill the law of Christ.” Now, again, Paul’s going to begin by saying that we’ve been set free from the law of, the legalism and this law and pattern of sinful desires. Paul’s going to substitute that with the law of Christ, and the law of Christ is loving our neighbor as ourself. The law of Christ is walking according to the Spirit, fulfilling the fruit of the Spirit.

As we come to this end, we have a great reminder that the fruit

of the Spirit is meant to bring unity. In the last session I talked about the whack-a-mole game that I loved as a kid, but another game that I loved as a kid was Barrel of Monkeys. This was before Nintendo and Atari, and we would just sit around with this barrel of monkeys. We have the monkeys and the barrel of monkeys. The goal was not to get one monkey out, but instead it was to connect the monkeys until you connected them all and could bring them out of that barrel. And so, what often happens is that in the church, we just kind of have the one monkey, *me*, but the goal of Christ is that He came to set us free, but He came to set us free through each other, by us coming and being part of this.

I love what Paul's going to say later, that "the fullness of God dwells in Jesus Christ," but he doesn't stop there. He says, "The fullness of Christ dwells within the church," or what he says in First Corinthians, "There's no spiritual gift that you're lacking." Peter would say, "God has given us everything that we need for life and for godliness." He has given all that we need to produce the fruit of the Spirit. And part of that need is you and me coming together as a barrel of monkeys, helping each other have the freedom that we have in Christ, so that we produce the fruit of the Spirit. That's what's regular. That's the spiritual fruit and biblical fiber and gospel fiber that we're seeking.

Thanks so much for allowing me to be a part of these sessions with you. I pray that the Lord would bless you and keep you and allow His face to shine upon you. That God's goodness and loving kindness will follow you all the days of your life. God bless.