

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT IS GOODNESS

Mark 10:17-21

Newbegun United Methodist Church

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The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We have been learning and practicing the fruit of the spirit. So far we have started with love, joy, peace, patience, and kindness. You have been asked to come to every Sunday's worship with your heart prepared to receive the message and then you have been asked to practice that fruit that was emphasized for the week. Last week was kindness. Are there any stories of how you did with kindness? Any changes to tell us about yourself as you have practiced kindness this week? How about the other fruit we looked at? Any sharing this morning? Well today we will focus upon goodness. Now since love is the blossom that produces the fruit; and all fruit of the Spirit grow from love, then joy is love rejoicing; peace is love resting; patience is love enduring; kindness is love in action; and goodness is love's motivation.

I've been told that bringing up children is easy - you just have to get them motivated. I suppose goodness is that same thing for the Holy Spirit – goodness is our motivation. When the fruit of the Spirit is fully developed in our lives, then goodness is at the heart of everything you and I do. Is goodness the motive of everything you or I do? I wish I could say it was my motive all the time; unfortunately I still need to let the fruit of the spirit develop in me to full and complete maturity. While goodness may not

always be my motive, I desire for goodness to be the reason behind how I live my life; I do want goodness to drive me and to motivate me. Goodness is not made up of the outward things we do; rather goodness is the inward reality of who we are in Christ Jesus.

In Mark 10 a man runs up to Jesus and asked Jesus how he might inherit eternal life. The man calls Jesus “good teacher,” which is interesting, don’t you think?

Anyways, Jesus said to him, do the commandments and the man replies that he has done this. Then Jesus said to him, “You lack only one more thing.” What was that one thing? “Follow me.” After the man was to give up all the possessions that was holding him back from a relationship with God he was to follow Jesus. In other words, we cannot have goodness in us apart from Jesus. Just as Jesus was a “good teacher” because he was one with the Father; so we can only have the fruit of the Spirit that is goodness when we are one with Jesus. Just as the goodness that was in Jesus made him God-like, so the goodness we have inside us motivates us to be Christ-like.

Goodness is what causes the likeness and image of Christ to be evident and real within us.

Let me say again – goodness in our motive. Goodness is not the external things we do but the internal reality of who we are in Christ Jesus. What does goodness look like? Can people see it in us and can we see it in others? Yes, we can! You will be able to know them by the fruit they bear. Matthew 12 reads, “When you grow a healthy tree you will pick healthy fruit. When you grow a diseased tree you will pick worm-eaten fruit.” James 3 reads, “Do clean and polluted water flow out of the same spring? Can a fig tree produce olives? Can a pool of salt water produce fresh water?” What are they

saying? One who has the fruit of the Spirit that is goodness in them will show it because it is an inward, natural thing for them to do. And this can only occur as one remains connected with Christ Jesus. How can we practice goodness?

When we are one with Christ Jesus we will develop a servant's heart. Jesus said, "I have not come to be served, but to serve." Matthew 20:28. In Acts 10:38 they said about Jesus that, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of evil because God was with him." Goodness is not about you, it is to glorify God. Goodness is your motivation. Other people are mentioned in the Bible, also. In Acts 9:36 we read about Tabitha: "In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha who was always doing good and helping the poor." In Acts 11:22-23 Barnabas reported this to the elders in Jerusalem: "When the church in Jerusalem heard what had happened, they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw this proof of God's favor, he was filled with joy and he encouraged the believers to stay true to the Lord. Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and strong in the faith. And large numbers of people were brought to the Lord." You see, goodness can be seen in you and in others. Barnabas saw it in others and others saw it in Barnabas. It may be inside, but you can tell because goodness is a person's motivation, not recognition.

You may not realize this but when we are one with Christ Jesus, goodness produces a sin-sensitive heart. You can tell when a person is filled with goodness because they will stay away from sinful desires. One person explained it like this: "At one time in my life I tried really hard to be a "good sinner." I was a "schizophrenic Christian" – in other words I was playing church to make mom and dad happy. I had

multiple masks I would put on as needed. I had one problem. Mom and Dad kept me involved at church and God's word continued to chip away at my sin hardened conscience. The Holy Spirit was making me sensitive to sin and I just couldn't sin good anymore. The pleasure of sin was gone and I just felt miserable even as I tried to find happiness through my sin." You will tell when goodness motivates a life for the pleasure of sin will be gone!

Lastly, the fruit of the Spirit that is goodness will be revealed because a person who is one with Christ Jesus will have a heart of generosity. Believe me when I say that generosity is much, much more than money. It is time, listening, giving, empathy, and more. Since goodness is our motivation, and goodness is related to our oneness with Christ Jesus, then generosity is how one thinks, acts, and lives.

OK, you tell me next week how you practiced goodness and lived out of generosity. The world is open to you next week.

Goodness is our motivation. It is about our oneness with Christ Jesus. It is about serving; being sin-sensitive; and being generous. May the fruit of the Spirit that is goodness be multiplied in each and every one of us. Amen.