

Osaka International Church
Series: Acts #09
Title: Fruit of the Spirit

Pastor Daniel Ellrick
Scripture: Galatians 5:22-6:10
Special Events: OIC 37th anniversary

October 23rd, 2011
Key Verse: Galatians 5:22-23

Good morning and Happy Anniversary! Since October 13th, 1974, when Pastor Jack Marshall presided over the first worship service, OIC has had a long and blessed journey. The road has not always been easy; the church has gone through some challenging times. But the Lord has always been with us and the Lord is with us today. Amen!

OIC has been fruitful. There have been many decisions for Jesus and many baptisms. There have also been a number of new churches and ministries, especially Deaf Ministries International, that have been born out of the ministry of OIC by the Lord's grace. Praise the Lord!

We give thanks for these blessings, and we also look forward to seeing much more fruit come from the ministry of OIC in future months and years. Let's look forward joyfully to seeing that fruit, and diligently pray and work for it. It is the Lord who builds His church, but He also uses our efforts in His work.

In Acts, we have begun to see how the Holy Spirit takes on a central role in building the church. I pray that as we are learning about the work of the Holy Spirit that all of us have begun to thirst for more of the Spirit. I remember that in **Luke 11:9**, Jesus said, **"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."** Just a few lines after Jesus said this, Jesus revealed that He was speaking especially of the Holy Spirit when He told His disciples to ask, seek, and knock. So, let's be bold in our prayers and ask for more of the Spirit daily. There is one aspect of the work of the Holy Spirit that we have not yet discussed, and that is the fruit of the Spirit. So, let's take a look at the fruit of the Spirit today. Let's begin by reading Galatians 5:22-6:10.



I. Scripture Galatians 5:22-6:10, (NIV 1984)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, 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 sinful nature with its passions and desires. 25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

(Chapter 6) 1 Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. 2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, 5 for each one should carry his own load. 6 Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

II. Teaching

I grew up on a farm near Cameron, Missouri. This photo was taken near where we lived. We raised cattle and planted various crops on our farm, so the example of sowing and reaping is close to my heart. We worked hard, but we also had a lot of fun - hunting, fishing, and swimming in the pond.

Farmland near Cameron, Missouri



Our most valuable crop was the sweet corn from grandmother's farm nearby. We planted 20 acres, which is a little more than 24,000 tsubo, of sweet corn each year. On a really good year, a 20 acre field can produce 300,000 ears of corn or more, all of which had to be harvested by hand, so it was big job. That probably makes it sound like we were rich, but the truth is wholesale prices were very low and most years the weather was less than ideal and the harvest was much smaller. In a really bad year, the whole crop was lost to thunderstorms or insects. But despite the risks, every spring we planted corn.



Galatians 6:7 says, **“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.”** Obviously, if we had planted beans, we would not have been able to harvest corn. But what if we had deliberately planted weeds? What kind of a crop would we get then? We would get weeds, a whole field of weeds. Friend, your life is like a field and what you choose to plant in your life is very important.



In **Galatians 5:19-21**, Paul gives us a stern warning about the danger of planting weeds in our lives. **“The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”** This is a stern warning. We need to take it to heart. Don't plant weeds in your life; plant better things.

Galatians 6:8, **“The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.”** Paul is warning us and urging us to make good choices about what we sow into our lives. But don't misunderstand what he is saying. Paul is not teaching salvation by works; he is simply pointing out the consequences of good and bad choices in how we live. In this same letter, Paul strongly affirms salvation by grace through faith, so Paul is not going to contradict himself here.

In **Galatians 2:15-16**, Paul says, **“know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.”** Justification, and therefore salvation, is received only through faith in Jesus. When Paul urges us to sow to please the Spirit, Paul is not teaching us how to be saved, he is teaching us how the saved person should live. The context makes this clear, as **Galatians 5:16** says, **“So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”**

We cannot live by the Spirit until we believe in Jesus and receive His Holy Spirit. The leading of the Holy Spirit is something God places in our hearts, it is not an external set of rules about what we should do or not do. But our actions, the choices we make day by day to either obey the Spirit or to ignore the Spirit, are like seed planted in a field. In time, we will reap a harvest of what we have planted. Have you ever heard the famous quote, *“Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny.”* Some people attribute it to Charles Reade and others to Ralph Waldo Emerson, so I am not sure of the true origin of these words, but they do have a message for us. When we think about and meditate on the things of God, the Holy Spirit will lead us to godly action. Over time godly actions will become godly habits, which will produce godly character. And when we become people of godly character, then we will be used by God in amazing ways.

Take a look again at **Galatians 5:22-23**, **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”** Notice that the fruits of the Spirit are not actions. These words do not describe what we do; they describe what kind of person we are. In other words, the fruits of the Spirit are all about character. If we meditate on

the things of God, and especially on the Word of God, then the Holy Spirit will grow godly character in our hearts. When we meditate on the love of God; then we learn to love our neighbor. When we meditate on the joy of the Lord, we begin to experience joy in our lives. When we meditate on the peace of Christ, we experience the peace that passes understanding, etc.

Sow to the Holy Spirit, live by the Spirit, and you will reap a wonderful harvest of godly character. But notice that the way this works is quite different from the gifts of the Spirit that we talked about last week. When someone gives you a gift, you receive it and it is yours. Gifts are not grown; gifts are received from the giver. But fruit is grown, and that takes time; it is not instant. Fruit does not spring up overnight.

It is interesting to me that Paul chose to speak of the fruits of the Spirit, and not of the vegetables or grains of the Spirit. Why? I don't know for sure, but I suspect it has something to do with time. Grains and vegetables can be grown in a few weeks or months. But fruit takes longer.

~~Vegetables of the Spirit~~



~~Grains of the Spirit~~



In addition to the sweet corn field, Grandma also had a few apple and peach trees on her farm. The fruit from these trees was mostly for us, there really wasn't enough to sell, but I remember times when we discussed the possibility of planting more fruit trees. Mom might have said something like, "Wouldn't it be nice to have a whole orchard of fruit trees and sell the fruit?" But Dad would have answered "Do you know how long it would take to grow an orchard?"

It takes a long time to grow fruit. If you want to grow an apple orchard starting with seeds, it will take you about ten years before your first harvest and more than twenty years before the trees reach full size. You can shorten the process by buying and transplanting trees that are already a few years old, but it still takes some years before you have a harvest. Growing fruit is not for the impatient. I loved my Dad, but patience and long-term planning were not his strongest points. He was not willing to take on the hard work of preparing a field and planting an orchard when the harvest would not arrive for many years.

That is similar to the problem many of us with regard to the fruits of the Spirit. We want patience, and we want it now! But when it comes to the fruit of the Spirit, there is no shortcut. If you want to enjoy the fruit of the Spirit in your life, you need to start planting and cultivating and you need to continue for many years. As one person put it, if you want broccoli-character in your life, you can grow it in a few weeks. But if you want oak tree-character, that is going to take some time.



III. Conclusion

2 Timothy 2:21 (ESV), says, "Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work." If we turn away from all that is dishonorable and sow to the Spirit we will reap a harvest of righteousness in our lives and a godly character, and then we will be ready to serve our Lord Jesus effectively in many ways. It takes time to grow spiritual fruit in our lives, but the reward is worth it.

Today, we are celebrating our OIC 37th anniversary. But there will be another and far more wonderful celebration when we go home to heaven to be with our Lord Jesus forever. It is my prayer that all of us will be there on that day and that many of us will receive good rewards for our service to the Lord in this life. Sow the good seed and grow the fruits of the Spirit in your life and on that day you may wear a crown of glory. Let's close with **1 Peter 5:4, "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away."** Let's pray.

IV. Prayer

Dear heavenly Father,

Thank you for the years of fruitful ministry that you have given to our church. Thank you for the wonderful Good News of Jesus that you have provided for us through His finished work on the cross. Thank you for the resurrection, the promise of eternal life made sure. Thank you for your Holy Spirit, given to lead and guide in our lives. Loving Lord, I pray that each and every person here might know the joy of walking with Jesus and living by His Holy Spirit. Open our eyes and hearts to understand the gospel and to see Jesus. Pour out your Spirit on your people. Give us gifts for service in your Kingdom. Lead and guide us and protect us from temptation; grow spiritual fruit in our lives, for your glory. Bless this church and all of our church family, also, our family, friends and neighbors. Pour out your grace and heal this land. In the Name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.