

Into the Wilderness || A Series Through Lent

Where's the Fruit?

Sermon Synopsis: The sure sign of spiritual growth is the fruit of the Spirit. Here's how you get it.

Galatians 5:22-25 (ESV)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

How do you know if you are growing? (especially in a wilderness season)

Knowledge? Productivity?

The problem with growth

John 5:39. Knowledge: Pharisees knew a LOT of Bible, but were jerks

Luke 10:38-40. Productivity: Martha was productive, yet still missing something. **illust: my story**

The sign of growth

illust: **Where's the fruit!**

Bible: FRUIT of the Spirit

Love: being committed to someone's highest good, without any guarantee of reciprocity, and even at your own expense

1 John 4:10 "This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

You know you have it, if you have all the others...

Joy: delight in God that enables you to move forward

Counterfeit: elation based on circumstances

Measurement: able to consistently enjoy God's presence when circumstances are bad

Peace: confidence and rest in God's control rather than your own

Counterfeit: indifference

Measurement: the ability to be non-reactive and connected in the midst of chaos

Patience: the ability to endure difficult situations without melting down

Counterfeit: resentment or lack of grit

Measurement: (self-explanatory)

Kindness: the willingness to serve others in a way that is costly and vulnerable

Counterfeit: manipulation

Measurement: a general detachment for "what's ours", and willingness to bless

Goodness: being the same person no matter what

Counterfeit: stubborn and inflexible

Measurement: the ability to maintain principles/values while in a resistant environment

Faithfulness: being reliable and trustworthy

Counterfeit: insensitive

Measurement: the courage to follow through after being presented with an easy way out

Gentleness: being clear and firm without being harsh

Counterfeit: defensiveness

Measurement: saying something true and challenging without emotional reaction

Self-control: the ability to pursue the important over the urgent

Counterfeit: legalistic

Measurement: the ability to restrain yourself from what you previously depended on

The power for growth

Our inclination is to pick one these that we're good at (and disregard our weak spots)

Problem: fruit (sarx) is singular—fruit is having all of these qualities!

If you have one, but not the other, you're just describing your *natural tendencies*

Example: you may be able to stand on principle (good), but unable to manage emo (gentle). You may say, I'm not gentle, but I'm good. But that's not goodness at all. You're just a bulldozer. You say, I'm gentle, but not faithful—that's not gentleness, but cowardice.

The fruit of the Spirit is a detailed expansion of what it means to love the Lord with your whole self, and your neighbor as yourself. Like Jesus. Hence, "against such things there is no law."

It's the Kingdom of God invading your life (in Christ)

A way forward

The Spirit is working in his people. If you belong to Christ, He is working to change you.

What's your part?

1. Surrender your weakest link.

What area do you lack?

Pursue that Spirit-born fruit in your life!

And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.** (Galatians 5:24-25)

Gospel: union w/Christ means union w/Spirit

1. Train for Christlikeness.

That's why the wilderness is such good training ground.

It's where our flesh is challenged.

Don't waste your wilderness!

Seek out opportunities for the Spirit to grow you in your weakest areas.

Galatians 2:20 (ESV)

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.