

# MONDAY 03 October 2022 "The Spirit's Fruit" (Gal. 5:19-26)

Good morning my "Walking with Jesus" friends all around the world,

Here's a question I often hear: *'Why is there so much evil in our world? Why does it seem that despite all the religions everywhere in the world, evil and wickedness and all the human pain and suffering only seem to increase?'* Do you sometimes hear questions like that? And what is your answer my friends?

And here are two other statements I sometimes hear: *'Darkness can only be dark, we can't expect darkness to produce any light.'* Or here it is another way: *"Evil can only produce evil, we can't expect good to come out of evil."* I wonder what you think of those statements my friends.

*From the day evil came into the garden of Eden as described in Genesis 3, the individual and global struggle of good and evil has been a prominent part of the human story in every place human beings live, isn't that true?*

Come and join me again in Syrian Antioch, about 48ad, as the apostle Paul is writing his first letter. We have this little letter translated for us in almost every language of the world, and it's found in our Bible, known as Paul's letter to the Galatians. Paul is writing to Gentile Christians in the towns he and Barnabas had visited some months before, in the region today known as central Turkey. As we settle into our places to watch and listen to Paul as he writes, I imagine Paul has just closed the door to his little house in part to get some quiet since there's so much noise outside his house. That noise, and the words chosen in disagreements, anger, conflict etc. are a reflection of what Paul is being led by the Holy Spirit to write about today.

He picks up his stylus and speaks the words as he writes: ***"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."*** (Gal. 5:19-21)

Now that is quite a list isn't it my friends? *May I ask, as you consider the society in which you live, no matter what city or country you call home, do you think Paul was being fair as he used those strong words to describe the evidence of the human sinful nature on display in your city?* Look closely at the list and you'll see the words are separated by semicolons which seems to identify categories of evil! Remember this weekend we looked at Gal. 5:16-18 in which Paul very clearly described the spiritual conflict every person lives in, everywhere in the world: ***"...the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God desires what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other..."*** What Paul calls ***"the sinful nature"*** is the normal, natural human nature we are all born with, no exceptions.

*That 'sinful nature' permeates every part of each of us...* our thinking and our reason; our feelings and our emotions; our fantasies and our hopes; our will power and our personal agendas.

*There is no part of us that is naturally holy or perfect.* Every part of our human nature has been infected by evil. Every family, every school, every police force, every community, every nation attempts to put in place rules and codes of ethics and moral values and expectations which try to curtail the expression of that evil in our words, our attitudes, choices, actions and behavior. But alas, we can't build courtrooms or prisons fast enough, we can't find and elect honest politicians fast enough, we can't hire and train police and judges fast enough and sadly all of them have sinful natures of their own which skew their ability to make or enforce the laws with justice and fairness. *We are a doomed human race, imploding in our own selfishness, greed, deceitfulness, injustice, immorality and every other form of wickedness. There is no hope for us, for we cannot fix our deeply rooted sin sickness, which is consuming every person, do you agree?*

So, God, the holy creator of our universe and our human race, has only two choices. *Either destroy it all and start all over or provide a way for human beings to be changed by His power.* Of course, aren't we grateful, God has chosen to do the later, and Paul has been reminding us in this letter he is writing, that when God had determined it was the right time He sent His Son Jesus Christ, God the Son, to explain God's truth about all this and then die an atonement death so God could forgive repentant sinners and transform them with a new spiritual nature and the indwelling Holy Spirit, *so they could actually live God honoring lives!* And so, Paul next writes some of the most wonderful news, the glorious description of what these God transformed people are like. I wonder if you've ever encountered people who have these attributes, as Paul writes them: ***"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."*** (Gal. 5:22,23)

*You'll notice each of those powerful descriptors are words Paul is saying are the product, the fruit, the evidence of a person living under the strong influence of the Holy Spirit of God.* Remember Paul had written that ***"the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit of God and the Spirit desires what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other."*** (Gal. 5:17) Well my friends, would you agree that those two descriptive lists of attitudes and behavior could not be more opposite from each other? Dark and Light; Good and Evil; Truth and False. *You'll notice Paul challenges us to consider that there is no place in the world where the people have made laws which prevent people from living... 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.'* In fact, those words describe utopia, do you agree!? Therein is the dichotomy, the antithesis. *We all want to live in a place like that, but no human being will naturally live like that without God's help!*

And so, with a smile on his face Paul writes one more summary statement for today: **"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other."** (Gal. 5:24-26) What does it mean? *It means that as you and I repent of our sinful ways of thinking and acting, and we turn to Jesus in full trust for Him to save us, we also invite the Holy Spirit of God to live within us and change us from the inside!* That's what it means to **'belong to Christ'**. *In our repentance we abandon, we reject, we seek to uproot that sinful nature within us. And we seek to fill our hearts and minds with God's Truth and yield our hearts and minds to every work of holy transformation, sanctification, the Holy Spirit is working in us as new creations in Christ.*

Now that is all so powerful, we need to pause with Paul right here! He has set down his stylus and he's standing by the doorway again looking out and imagining how different his town, Syrian Antioch would be, if every person in that city was transformed by the power of the resurrected, living Jesus Christ. So, let's do the same... *how different would your life, your marriage, your family, your community be IF Jesus Christ was both your Savior and your life transforming LORD, Master!* Let's talk with Jesus about that right now my friends, and here's a song to help us consider the power of this transformation available in Jesus!

**Today's Scripture is Galatians 5:19-26.**