

How Can You Tell?
Week 2
John 16:7-15, Galatians 5:17-25
“The Parakletos and Personality”

Introduction

I will not leave you as orphans: I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live too. On that day you will know that I am in My Father, you are in Me, and I am in you. **John 14:18-20**

Last week we began a short series of messages designed to help us, as Believers, to be able to discern the difference between someone who merely claims to be a follower of Christ, as opposed to a person who possesses a genuine saving faith. There are so many “pseudo christians” who are leading others astray with their imitation Christianity. *The Bible* encourages us (actually commands us) to test every spirit to see whether or not it is genuine (**1 John 4:1-5**).

Some would try and argue that as Christians, we should never judge anyone else's behavior in order to determine the reality of their faith. But those people have a terrible understanding of Scripture. *The Bible* clearly teaches that while we are not to judge lost people for acting like lost people, we must certainly judge those who claim to be followers of Christ. And if we do this, as they continue to live like the world, we are not only to judge them for it, but also to avoid them! Listen to Paul's admonition to the church at Corinth:

I wrote to you in a letter not too associate with sexually immoral people. I did not mean the immoral people of this world or the greedy and swindlers or idolaters; otherwise you would have to leave this world. But actually, I wrote you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister and is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or verbally abusive, a drunkard or a swindler. Do not even eat with such a person. For what business is it of mine to judge the outsiders? Don't you judge those who are inside? God judges the outsiders. Remove the evil person from among you. **1 Corinthians 5:9-13**

If you will indulge my *Southern English* here: There are a lot of Scripture passages in *The Bible* that are hard to understand, *but this ain't one of em!* We are commanded not only to inspect the fruit of those who claim to be Christians, but to avoid them when they claim to be one kind of tree, while bearing the fruits of another, so to speak.

In our last session, we discussed when a person has been born-again in Christ, they are given a “new mind”. This is done in us by the working of The Holy Spirit, Who creates within us a desire to not only come to know Christ in a more intimate way, but to be obedient to Christ, seeking to please Him above all else. When we have this *new mind*, it is diametrically opposed to our old flesh, so there is born in us a struggle which will remain until we are ultimately glorified in the perfect image of Christ Jesus. But until then, we have a new mind in an old body. And the two of them are completely incompatible. Therefore, we must rely upon The Spirit to guide us in all that we say and do.

Today, as we continue our study, we will see what a person is like when The Spirit is in control of their life. And while no one has this walk with God down to perfection this side of glory, there are some real and obvious signs that a genuine Believer will have so that everyone can see the difference between the truly born-again Believer, and the pseudo-believer. There are many religious people in this world, but only a few are genuine disciples of Christ. And in those few, there are spiritual characteristics that will stand out for all to see.

So let us look together at these signs of saving faith, the *fruits* of salvation, if you will, in order to readily be able to recognize the effects of a mind transformed in Christ. Every true Believer will have these things, these fruits that serve as proof of salvation. And while there are many infallible proofs of such a transformation, we will look at two of them today; namely, The ***Parakletos*** (*The Comforter*), along with the ***Personality*** of Christ that is evident in those who have been reborn from above. Please allow me to explain.

The Parakletos (John 16:7-15)

Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth. It is for your benefit that I go away, because if I don't go away The Counselor will not come to you. If I go, I will send Him to you. When He comes, He will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment: About sin, because they do not believe in Me; about righteousness, because I am going to The Father and you will no longer see Me; and about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged. I still have many things to tell you, but you can't bear them now. When The Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak whatever He hears. He will also declare to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, because He will take from what is Mine and declare it to you. Everything The Father has is Mine. This is why I told you that He takes from what is mine and will declare it to you.

John 16:7-15

The night before He went to the cross, Jesus explained to His disciples that He would be going away. Needless to say, they were devastated. However, He encouraged them by letting them know that this was actually going to be good for them, for After He had returned to His Father, they would be sending a Parakletos (the word literally means “one who comes alongside”) to guide them. When Christ walked with His disciples on earth, He was *with* them, but when The Comforter would come, He would literally be “*in them*”. And this is why Jesus told them it would be beneficial for them that He go away.

The Parakletos (Holy Spirit) now resides within every true Believer. He is the one who actually “transforms our minds” like we have already spoken of before. There is never a time or a place where a Believer will find themselves apart from The Holy Spirit, for we have been literally baptized into Christ and are in Him as He is in us (**Galatians 3:27**). The Spirit serves as a guide who comes to live within us as Christ has said, to “guide us into all truth..” (**vs. 13**).

The role of The Spirit in every Believer is to become a “coach”, if you will. Because with our new mind we long to please Christ above all else, and yet, we still have a “body of death” that wants to live to please self. The Spirit coaches us so that we can follow the desires of our new mind as we put to death the desires of our old nature. He does this by not only acting as a conscience, convicting us of our sins, but He uses God's Word to remake us into the image of Christ.

Before we were endowed with our “new mind” and given the Parakletos to live within us, the teachings of Scripture were unclear and unattainable for us. But The Spirit gives us discernment to not only understand The Word, but also empowers us to live accordingly.

For who knows a person's thoughts except his spirit within him? In the same way, no one knows the thoughts of God except The Spirit of God. Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but The Spirit Who comes from God, so that we may understand what has been freely given to us by God. We also speak these things, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by The Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. But the person without The Spirit does not receive what comes from God's Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand since it is evaluated spiritually. The spiritual person, however, can evaluate everything, and yet he himself cannot be evaluated by anyone. For who has known the LORD'S mind, that He may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

1 Corinthians 2:11-16

So, if it were not for the indwelling of The Spirit, no one would even be able to understand the things of God, yet alone be able to live according to them. It is The Spirit Who empowers every born-again child of God to comprehend, cherish, and to follow the commands of Christ. For everyone who has been born again from above by The Spirit longs to please The Savior above all else.

The Personality (Galatians 5:16-25)

I say, then, walk by The Spirit and you will certainly not carry out the desire of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is against The Spirit, and The Spirit desires what is against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you don't do what you want. But if you are led by The Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: Sexual immorality, moral impurity, promiscuity, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, strife, jealousy, outburst of anger, selfish ambitions, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and anything similar. I am warning you about these things — as I warned you before — that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of The Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The law is not against such things. Now 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. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.
Galatians 5:16-26

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul clearly distinguishes between those who are lost and self-consumed with those who are reborn and Spirit-filled. Although Christians **do** have an inner struggle against the flesh, a born-again Believer cannot live a life of sin. There is a vast difference between occasional sin and living in sin. To the lost person, sin is all they really know. Their consumption with self-love compels them to do whatever their fleshly desires are craving in the moment.

If we had more time to discuss Paul's fairly extensive list of the characteristics of the unregenerate, we would see a snapshot of the world in which we live. There is one particular item in the center of the list that I believe is paramount in enabling us to comprehend the unrighteousness of mankind. The word is *eritheia* in the Greek and is translated selfish ambitions in the CSB. The word in its original form describes a person who is willing to do whatever it takes in order to promote himself above his peers. It is a political word which describes the method in which a crooked politician would do or say anything to promote himself into a position of authority. This is a demonic trait that is indicative of the personality of Satan himself. And to be honest, it is the basis for all other sin. To desire to promote oneself is at the very heart of the soul who is at enmity with God.

As a pastor, I have seen many times the incredible lengths to which an individual with such a twisted mind will go in order to elevate their status. I have witnessed first hand how manipulative individuals have destroyed the lives of others in order to achieve some desired status. I have seen this behavior, even within the church! These demonic people could care less who they hurt or whose reputation is destroyed, just as long as they get what their twisted heart desires. As Christians, we are to ever be on our guard for such demonic activity within our ranks and to expel those who would cause strife and division.

As Paul has ever so dramatically demonstrated for us, there is a stark difference between the unregenerate and the born-again. And when a person has been given a new mind in Christ there are certain distinguishing characteristics that begin to appear. Jesus has told us that we are able to discern between the true and the false based upon inspection of the fruit they bear.

Be on your guard against false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves. You'll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit and every bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree can't produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So you'll recognize them by their fruit.
Matthew 7:15-20

So, exactly what kind of "fruit" can we expect to see from a genuine born-again Believer? It is what Paul refers to in Galatians as "*The Fruit of The Spirit*". And simply put, it is a genuine reflection of the personality of Christ Himself. To be indwelt by The Spirit of Christ is to have His personality traits to become increasingly prevalent in the actions of those who are being renewed by The Spirit.

Paul gives us nine personality traits of a person who has been born-again from above. It is important to note that he doesn't say, "the fruits of The Spirit are" (plural), but rather he says "the fruit of The Spirit is" (singular). This is an important distinction because a person who truly has The Holy Spirit within them will demonstrate **all** of these attributes for they are the evidence of genuine salvation. So let us look at each component of this spiritual personality one at a time for our own understanding.

1. Love, *agape* in the Greek, meaning the selfless love that comes from God seeking nothing in return. Jesus said that all men would know that we are His disciples, if we have love for one another.
2. Joy, *chara* in the Greek, which speaks of a confident gladness that comes from deep within. The child of God can have joy in all circumstances for they know that no matter what difficulties they face, God is for them. Nothing can ever steal away the joy of The Spirit.
3. Peace, *eirene* in the Greek, which speaks of the inner calm that guards the hearts of every Believer. We know that we are strangers in this world, but we possess a peace that passes all understanding and confidently await the coming kingdom of Christ.
4. Patience, *makrothymia*, meaning patient endurance, often translated as long-suffering, which means that the Believer has a "long-fuse", as it were, rather than a "short fuse". Simply put, the one who is led by The Spirit can control his temper.
5. Kindness, *chrestotes*, which carries with it the idea of being gentle in one's dealings. Not harsh or mean-spirited, but kind and gentle with others
6. Goodness, *agathosyne*, a word that is synonymous with *chrestotes*, but is generally considered to be a bit stronger. It describes a person who is firm in conviction and righteousness.
7. Faithfulness, *pistis*, the Spirit-filled Believer will have the conviction of his/her calling and will live in such a way that demonstrates faith in action, not simply in words but in deed.
8. Gentleness, *praiotes*, meaning meekness. The born-again Believer has such faith in Christ as to surrender their power and will to His Lordship. It is not weakness, but rather strength yielded over to The Spirit's control, much the same way a horse would yield up its power to be controlled by its master.
9. Self-control, *enkrateia*, to be virtuous and able to master one's own desires and passions. To take hold of the flesh and subdue it for the righteous life that Christ requires.

These are the marks of a true Believer under the control of The Spirit, and thereby, demonstrating the very personality of Christ Jesus in the way that they live out each day. As we mature in the faith and are sanctified by The Spirit, these attributes will shine through in us all the more, as our own flesh begins to fade away. If a person does not display these things in ever increasing measure, then they do not have a genuine saving faith. This is how we can know whether someone is truly saved, or not. Examine their lives (fruit) and see if it looks more like the works of the flesh or the fruit of The Spirit. If you have the *Parakletos*, then you will also have His *Personality* as well. For Christ has told us:

You will recognize them, by their fruit.

TRUTH!!!