

Jesus said - By Their Fruits You Will Know Them

[Jesus said,] ***You will know them by their fruits.*** (Matthew 7:16a)

Last week we were reminded that we have the supreme privilege of being filled to overflowing by the Holy Spirit so that we might bear the fruit of the Spirit. When we bear this fruit, it allows us to look increasingly more like the Lord Jesus, here and now. This is the goal! To be more like Jesus!

As part of the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7, Jesus speaks a warning about “false prophets” and states that the way you will know they are false prophets is by “their fruits.” (Matthew 7:15-20) In other words, the virtues and behaviors the false prophets regularly exhibit will reveal their true selves, their character and motives. The same will be true for those who faithfully desire to follow after Jesus and proclaim the TRUTH that comes from God through Christ Jesus. ***“Thus you will know them by their fruits.”*** (Matthew 7:20)

In Paul’s letter to the Galatians, he said this Spirit fruit includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, Gal. 5:22.

- Are you able to look at this fruit, these behaviors and habits of the heart, and say – “Ah, yes, this is who Jesus was in his earthly ministry and is today?” Do we know Jesus well enough to be sure of this?
- Looking at the fruit of the Spirit, how is it possible to yield this fruit in our lives? What does John 15:5, in the words of Jesus, say about where this strength and determination will come from?
- Before the listing of the fruit of the Spirit, Paul speaks a warning against gratifying “the desires of the flesh.” (Gal. 5:16-17) Look at the list of the “works of the flesh” that details that which is “opposed to the Spirit” (v. 17-21). What do you notice about the behaviors and habits of the heart in this list? Does anything surprise you? Why do you think Paul included this list, even as he admits it’s not an exhaustive one (v. 21a)?
- Are you ready and eagerly willing to bear the fruit of the Spirit (v. 22), becoming more like Jesus? (See Galatians 5:24-26.)