

Every Good Tree LOVE

Matthew 7:16-20

July 18, 2020

Our scripture for the next 9 sermons begins and concludes with this statement, ***“You will RECOGNIZE them by their fruits.”***

Context

Jesus was wrapping up the Sermon on the Mount. He had just told the crowd to beware of false prophets who walk around in sheep’s clothing, but are in fact, ravenous wolves..... ***“You will RECOGNIZE them by their fruits.”***

I believe the same directive should be applied to **ALL** who call themselves Christians. Not every person who claims that title is a sheep in the pasture of God.

Many are **ravenous wolves** whose only desire is to injure, maim and destroy. It is import for us to realize that not all sin is irreligious. Satan is thrilled when we dress sin up in the robes of religion and pioussness **{Pharisees – Matthew 23}**. How do you tell?

“You will RECOGNIZE them by their fruits.”

- selfish and self-centered and jealous for the praise of men
- reject the Truth and disguise disobedience with religious zeal or “new light”.
- greedy
- proud and arrogant and boastful
- envious and jealous
- cause strife and division and love to argue
- deceitful and untrustworthy
- vindictive and malicious and critical and judgmental
- gossip and make false statement about others
- rude and disrespectful and bigoted and biased and show partiality
- impatient and easily angered and unkind and cold-hearted and harsh and severe and unyielding

“You will RECOGNIZE them by their fruits.”

- **1 John 3:10-11 - This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are:** Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. ¹¹ This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should **love one another.**

Don’t just listen to the words that come out of a **“religious”** person’s mouth --- watch what he does / treats people / lives his life.

That brings us to the **1st piece of evidence** in a life that is being transformed into the image of Jesus --- **LOVE**

On the outside someone might have all the characteristics of a great **“religious”** person, but Jesus says if they don’t love people the way God loves people, they misrepresent Him because **God loves people.**

- **1 Corinthians 13:1-13** - If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love.... It is:

- patient
- kind
- does not envy
- does not boast

- not proud
- not rude
- not self-seeking
- not easily angered
- keeps no record of wrongs
- does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth

Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails....

Love reflects the very nature of God. What Love **IS** God **IS**. God's love for us flows out of His nature of love. He doesn't love us anyway – despite ourselves. His love is not conditional. His love does not fluctuate based on what we do. He just **LOVES** us. Period. Full stop. How do we know this is true?

- **John 3:16** - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- **Romans 5:8** - But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
- **1 John 3:16** – This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.
- **1 John 4:7-10** - Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸ Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹ This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 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.

So, if **LOVE IS** what **God IS**, then what should be the evidence in the life of those who claim to follow Him?

- **Matthew 22:37-40** - Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."
- **John 13:34-35** - A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.
- **Colossians 3:12-14** - Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience**. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.
- **1 John 4:11** - Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

At the very center of the obedient life is love. As we respond to God's love for us, we **desire** to obey Him and His love spills over into our lives and we begin to love as He loves.

- **Romans 5:5** - And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

As a matter of fact, God's view of perfection {**not sinless perfection but Christian maturity**} is tied directly to love:

- **Matthew 5:43-48** - You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I tell you: **Love your enemies** and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**
- **1 John 4:15-21** - Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶ And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. ¹⁷ By this, love is perfected with us, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. ¹⁸ There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. ¹⁹ We love, because He first loved us. ²⁰ If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. ²¹ And this commandment we have from Him, **that the one who loves God should love his brother also.**

Not what we eat. Not how much tithe we give. Not any of the things we might put high on the list of requirements for Christian "**perfection**". How we **LOVE** people demonstrates whether or not we are maturing in our walk with Jesus.

Now, that kind of love does not come naturally to us --- we have no ability to manufacture Godly love through human effort..... But **LOVE** is meant to be a hallmark of the Christian life – it is not an optional extra.

What is the solution? Allowing the Holy Spirit into our lives to guide and transform them. The Holy Spirit will not automatically operate in the life of a Christian. A transformed life only happens as we surrender to and cooperate with the Holy Spirit.

Choosing the Holy Spirit is an absolute necessity for Victorious Christian living. Why? Because the power of a fruitful life does not lie with the believer, but with the Spirit. Just as an apple tree doesn't think about producing apples – it produces apples because it's an apple tree and because it's connected with the source of life, so it is with a believer. A believer doesn't **TRY** to produce righteous fruit. He produces fruit **BECAUSE** he is a believer and **BECAUSE** he is connected to his source of life --- the Holy Spirit.

- **John 15:1-17** - "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² "Every branch in Me that does not bear **fruit**, He takes away; and every *branch* that bears **fruit**, He prunes it, that it may bear more **fruit**. ³ "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. ⁴ "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear **fruit** of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither *can* you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵ "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much **fruit**; for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶ "If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. ⁷ "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. ⁸ "**By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.** ⁹ "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. ¹¹ "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full. ¹² "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. ¹³ "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ "You are My friends, if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ "No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ "You did not choose Me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear **fruit**, and *that* your **fruit** should remain, that whatever you ask of the Father in My name, He may give to you. ¹⁷ **This I command you, that you love one another.**

LOVE is produced by God's work **IN** us --- **IT'S A GIFT**.

- **Galatians 5:22-25** - The **FRUIT** of the Spirit is **LOVE, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control**; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live **by** the Spirit, let us also walk **by** the Spirit.

Love is 1st because love is the core of the fruit. Without love you cannot possibly have **joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control**.

Finally, Paul tells us that to live by the Spirit is more than talking about it or pointing out its necessity in other Christians. If we're going to talk it, we'd better walk it.

LOVE, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, is the evidence that the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives – transforming us into the image of Jesus.

Every Good Tree Produces ---- LOVE