

Understanding the FRUIT of GOD (Part 1)

Bertie Brits

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Today we are going to talk about, Galatians 2:20, a very famous passage in the Bible. I think that the most famous passage in the Bible is **John 3:16: For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son...** And then the second most famous would be the one where Paul says, **It is not I who live but Christ who lives in me.** It's a very powerful truth and we are going to look at that truth today. Today's message is going to be a short, yet, powerful message where we are just getting into the basics of Christ's rule in our life.

During the Communion message which was just prior to this, we spoke about Jesus Christ who was given to us where God came and gave His Son to us wherein the scripture in **Isaiah 9:6-7** distinguishes between a child and a son. What he said is that God has come to give us His Son. That means that He has come to give us a Ruler. He has come to give us a King who is righteous and who is just. When we look at politics in the world, it is all a fight for having a righteous and a just king who would care for the people, who would see their poverty, who would see their true sickness, their true disease. and have an accurate assessment of what is wrong in the world and then bring forth a solution.

Now, God has come and provided that Leader. He has come and has provided that King. That King is the man, Jesus Christ, who knows the true problem with humanity. The true problem with humanity is that man is dying and that man needs to have death conquered. We also know that the true problem with humanity was that man was trying to live by his own wisdom, therefore, providing Himself, then, as the wisdom of God to man so that we don't have to live by our own wisdom which is living by our own works whereby we, then, can have eternal life.

We will start off by defining what fruit is and what justification is. Then we are going to preach, verse by verse, Galatians 2:15-20 which ends with Paul saying, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me." This is what we all talk about and what we all want to see. In verse 20, he concludes that this resurrected King Jesus is living in him.

I want to start off by defining fruit.

You will see in my notes the Webster's definition of fruit. I do find that Webster's has a little bit of a negative connotation to fruit. I believe that he could have used some positive examples as well but it doesn't matter. It's just going to drive the point home.

It starts off by saying that fruit is

1. The produce of animals; offspring; young; as the fruit of the womb, of the loins, or of the body. It talks about fruit as we would know it in physical fruit... produce of plants or people or animals. It talks about a duplication or what people can bring forth or produce naturally.

2. Effect or consequence: This talks about what I want to get into. It talks about an effect or a consequence. "***They shall eat the fruit of their doings.***" **Isaiah 3.** So, we find that fruit is also described as an effect or a consequence.

3. Advantage; profit; good derived. This is now in the positive. **What fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? Romans 6.** This is where I think a positive example was needed here. It is something to your advantage. It is an effect in the direction of the positive. So, fruit can be toward the negative or towards the positive. It can be a fruit that derives of a source that is good or negative fruit that derives from a source that is bad.

4. Production, effect or consequence; in an ill sense; as the fruits of sin; the fruits of intemperance.

The, main thing that I want to say here and what I want to take from this definition that Webster's provides, is that fruit is an effect or a consequence. When we talk about the fruit of the Spirit, which we will get into more detail next week looking at Galatians, we are talking about the effect that the Spirit of God will have upon a person's life. When we talk about 'Christ in us', we are going to talk about the effect that the rulership of the man, Jesus, has on an individual's life.

When we look at politics, I mostly use South African politics because this is where I live and what I know well. When we look at the new South Africa that came into being in 1994, we find that this new rulership, or this new constitution, that we have, had an effect on us. It effects the way you think. It effects the way you act. It causes things to take place inside you. It is causative. It is a root or a foundation from where a life is now born. It can also be seen as repentance that was granted to man. We could now, as new South Africans, have a new way of thinking where we were stuck in a rut where we were thinking in a certain way. Now, with the new constitution, repentance is offered to us. We can now think differently. By the way, that is what the word repent means. It means to have a change of mind... a change of thinking.

When we talk about the fruit of God in our lives, or the fruit of the rulership of God in our lives, we are talking about the effect that God will have on humanity. We can conclude, by this definition, that fruit is not something that you are commanded to bear. The Bible does say that God wants us to bear much fruit. Therefore, He says in **John 15** that we cannot do anything of ourselves but if we abide in Him then we will bear much fruit. The bearing of fruit that we will bring forth will not be on our account but it would be on account of us being planted into the root which is then the source of the fruit we are bearing.

What he is saying to us is that God will, basically, bring forth the fruit inside us. He says that should we be planted into Christ, God will have an effect on us. He will produce who He is inside us. Being planted into Christ will have an effect in our lives.

I have heard it preached many times that, "If you are a Christian, you better behave!" as if being planted into Christ doesn't have an automatic effect. Peter goes so far as to say that if a person be a believer in Jesus and the belief that he has, has no fruit, it can only be ascribed to him forgetting what has happened on the cross and who he really is. Peter, if you read 2Peter, comes to the conclusion that the belief in Christ and understanding what it is all about automatically brings forth fruit. It says, "Those who do not bare this fruit has forgotten that they were saved. It has something to do with memory and belief. So, when we believe and we are reminded and we know that we are His and our sins are forgiven, we find an automatic effect in our lives. That's why we don't need 10 lessons in fruit bearing or "What is the good and right thing to do?".

I want to give you an example of that. If you go to my Facebook page, you will see that I did a post where I spoke about restitution. This is in the light of political situations in South Africa and in forgiveness and all of that. This came from a regular program that I listened to and then contacted the people that were part of a discussion. When we look at how restitution works, you will see, in that little video that I put up there and edited from YouTube, you will see that restitution is a fruit or forgiveness is something that takes place on account of a revelation of value. It is something that happens when Christ enters your heart.

I spoke to this person and the context of this is that there was in 1996 acts of terrorism where people planted bombs in Worcester, not far from where we live. Six or seven people got injured and four people died. One of the people, who planted these bombs, is now been released from jail. It is a beautiful story of restitution as pertained to him and the people that he harmed. I called him and asked him, "What role did God play in your life? Because the video that you watch about the restitution process does not have a lot about God in it." He said to me, "You are the person that is asking the question that people are scared to ask because people are scared to hear that this restitution was not something that is born from man deciding to go and fix things." He said that there are no Ten Steps to Be a Better Christian! You need Jesus in your life!" He said that when he received Jesus, he was delivered from racism and he loves all people the same and the root of this beautiful story of restitution is found in Jesus Christ. Political problems were solved by God and not by man deciding to write a program of restitution or man deciding that we all must do one thing because that is going to work. But, where God is the Author of it. He brings forth justice and judgement in the world which is to set people free from bitterness, hatred and resentment and whatsoever goes with the system of darkness.

The point that I am trying to make is, that even politically, in every area of your life, the only true solution is Christ having an effect on your life! It is not for man to behold the wisdom of God and then think that he can copy that wisdom, be a god in himself, making use of God to rule. Now let me explain that.

When you look at the tower of Babel, you will find that Nimrod built this massive tower. We always assumed that that was to get into the heavens to rule as God. There is some kind of a truth to that but I don't think that is what the Bible is trying to say. What they did back then was they would build a massive tower and next to the tower they would build a temple. Then, that tower would be an invitation to the God of the heavens to come down and live amongst them. If you go and read what happened there, you will see that they did this so that they could have a great name, basically making themselves God. They would say, "We will decide that we are going to make use of a mighty God to come and bless us so that we can, in that way, have a great name!", making themselves the one who decides... making themselves the ones who built their own name just also making use of God as a tool. God doesn't work that way! The way it works is: He is the Almighty God and all that we do is we submit to His love and His kindness and His goodness by saying that there is only one way where we can share in God's life. And that is the easy way! The easy way would be God bringing forth His life in us... for free!

When we look at Webster's definition of fruit, I want to conclude this: The fruit that God wants you to bear is the effect that God would have on your life as we simply trust Him. If you are taking notes, what I want you to jot down and put in your memory is this: In the first part of this message this is what I want you to know: Fruit is the result of God's goodness towards you or it is the effect that the good God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, would have on your life through the rulership of Jesus in your life. That is fruit bearing!

Fruit is not something that you can bear by yourself! Fruit in a person means a result of something you believe in or of someone else. We are fruit bearers. We either bear God's fruit or we bear the fruit of our own willpower or the fruit of the devil. We are fruit bearers. That is what we are. We are like trees and we are planted and the soil we are planted in or the root that we are planted in, will bear its fruit in us. That is how it works. The branch of itself can bear no fruit! You, of yourself, can bear no fruit... no fruit unto life... whatsoever! What you take home from this first part and the first definition is that you cannot bear fruit by yourself! God's fruit is the effect that God has on your life!

JUSTIFICATION

Thayer Definition:

- 1) to render righteous or such he ought to be
- 2) to show, exhibit, evidence of one's righteousness, such as he is and wishes himself to be considered
- 3) to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous, or such as he ought to be

I like point 2 there and I do believe that is the definition that we should mostly use in the Bible in our reading of the New Testament. It talks about God exhibiting or bringing forth evidence that we are righteous in trusting and believing Him. When we talk about justification, we are talking about the Almighty God saying, "Should you believe Me, you are righteous."

The right thing to do is to trust God and when you trust and believe God that He can do what He has said... I'm not defining this in the parameters of having all the worldly success and all those kinds of things. I am defining this in what He has said from the beginning: that He would give us eternal life.

When we trust in what God said, you are doing the right thing. When you are trying to produce eternal life or have a whole consciousness based on self-preservation, you are not doing the right thing. You are wrong. That is wrong. Now, God says, "Trust Me!" And that is right. You are righteous in trusting Him. "You are qualified for eternal life in trusting Me! What qualifies you is you, standing out of the way and trusting Me to give it to you for free!" That is what He is saying.

To justify means to exhibit or to bring forth evidence that the one who has been trusting God was right in doing that and the only way that can be is in God manifesting His promise inside you. To make that simple, if I tell my son, "Listen, trust me. I will pick you up at ten." And should he trust me and he rests in the fact that I can keep my word, he is correct in doing that. I will show that he was correct by picking him up at ten. When I pick him up at ten, it would be the justification or the rendering or the evidence that he did not believe a lie.

So, when God comes and He brings forth justification, it should be understood as God manifesting what He has promised in your life. Justification is not and should not be read just a legal term where we are justified in our actions where basically in God saying that we are not guilty anymore, we are now innocent. We should see justification as God actually bringing forth His fruit in us. You know that it is just that you have love in your life if you believe in the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ and it would be unjust for you to have bitterness and hatred and unforgiveness in your life. So when you trust God and you believe that He has overcome your sin and death and that Jesus is Lord, it is just and the justice of God to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in your life. When you are not relying on your human ability to obey the law, that you are relying on the Holy Spirit that brings forth life, it is absolutely just for you to have love, peace, joy, longsuffering, kindness and all those kind of things in your life.

The way I pray, and in my relationship with God, the way I deal with things in my life that I believe should not be there, is like this: Let's say that I find hatred in my heart. I go to God and I say, "God, I need justification. I need the justification of life. I believe in the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ and I am here for the justification of the Spirit wherein You bring forth the release from hatred in my life." So many times, we think that justification works the other way around where we have to repent of hatred or bitterness or unforgiveness so that God can justify us and that He can have a just reason to take us into heaven. No! It doesn't work that way. When we go to God and we find that we have bitterness and hatred in our lives, God looks at Jesus and His rule and he sees how we are in Him and then He has enough reason and it would be just for Him to release us from what is binding us.

You might say, "Why the process? Why, if we just believe in Jesus, we don't find it manifesting automatically?" I do believe it manifests automatically but I have also found that in the areas where I don't see fruit in my life that I need an adjustment of my belief in that area or a remembrance of who I am in Christ. So, when I go to the throne room of grace, to find help in the time of need, what do I find in the throne room of grace? I find mercy and grace and help in the time of need in the Holy Spirit reminding me of what I have freely received in Jesus. As I am reminded of this truth, I find Him manifesting His life in me. Glory to God!

Romans 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Can you see here, the free gift of God in Christ came to all men which is unto the justification which would be by the resurrection life of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:

11 But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.

12 And the law is not of faith: but, The man that does the law shall live in them (find life in them by the law).

What it is saying here is that the way God justifies us is not in a legal standing but He is justifying us in Him bringing forth His fruit in us. So, when the Bible says that God will, through Jesus Christ, manifest His kingdom through justice and judgement, it means that God will manifest His kingdom in this world in giving His people the fruit of His Spirit. And in giving His people life above death, removing death, bringing forth a life that is greater than the clutches of death, taking away the keys unto death, where the key to life is now given to us in Jesus Christ

Let me put it this way: When the Bible talks about the fruit of the Spirit, He is talking about God justifying His people. He's talking about Christ ruling in humanity. When I look at our country, many times we look at things and we find fear want to grip ahold of our hearts. And I found that it is true in every country. I have not visited a country in the world where I don't find people live in fear about the politics... every country. I've been to the Scandinavian countries, and to some of what is called the most civilized countries in the world. I've been to many countries in Europe, to the Americas, Canada, through Africa. I find people in every country live in fear! People feel the government is corrupt, it's not going to work out. Things are not going to go right.

Now, as you are in your country and you are looking at those things and you say, "This is not just!" That very voice inside you that says that this is not just and justice should be served, is the very voice of God saying to you that that system that you are beholding, cannot do it. But what I want you to know is that in that voice there is a hope for the scripture says in **Isaiah 9:6** *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*

Now, listen to this:

7 Of the increase of his government and (His) peace there shall be no end,

It says, "Of the increase". So, we find this increasing in the world. Amen!

It says, ***there shall be no end,***

You might look at your government and wonder what is going on here. If you look globally, the peace of God is on the increase. Then you might say that it is not like that. Just go and study the time of Jesus. Go and study the time of Abraham and study the Middle Ages and what was going on all over the world and the fear people lived in. Every little village had its army because you couldn't even live in the bush, somewhere, in peace. There was no place of peace. You had to have your army. I don't find that my family needs an army. Maybe there are some countries where it is needed but I don't need it.

I think it is going much better now and we are seeing the increase of the peace that there is in the world because of this government of Jesus Christ. And we can behold a lot of wrong that takes place in the world. You can behold a lot of things that are not right but as we see this injustice, what are we then doing when we see this injustice? What should we do as Christians? We are saying that He will justify me without the works of the law. He will bring the justification of life.

Even if some of us lose our lives in this world through this injustice that there is, we will find that God justifies us in the resurrection. At the end of the day we are going to see that there is no end in the increase of His kingdom and His government. There is no end. It doesn't matter how Islam strikes. The truth of the matter is Islam is becoming smaller. It doesn't matter if it looks as if atheism is on the rise, I want to tell you that it is becoming smaller. The truth is that the rule of God, through Jesus Christ, is on the increase in the world. Jesus is winning people's hearts. That is what is taking place. That is what the scripture teaches.

I want to say that when I live in a country and I see things not going well, do you know what I do? I rest my heart. When I feel that fear wants to come to me, I go to the throne room of grace where the Spirit of God reminds me, again, of the rule of Christ because fear is the fruit of not beholding the truth. Then I behold the truth and I am mindful that Christ is my life and I can see how God justifies me with peace in the midst of a broken world, glory to God, which He is busy fixing! Glory to God! We should not think that God cannot fix the world. He can!

Galatians 2:

15 "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Now, what does that mean? I want to focus on the part that says that we are not justified by the works of the law but by the faith of Jesus Christ. I remember that there was a time when I looked at that and said, "Jesus is believing on my behalf." That is a lie. It is not the truth. There is, to a certain degree, an element of truth in that Jesus does have a faith and through that persuasion that He has is bringing forth the result in our lives. But, that word, faith, there should rather be translated as faithfulness. It says, **Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law.** What Paul is saying there is knowing that no person can have life by his own works. He says, "...**but** (only) **by the faith** (the faithfulness) **of Jesus, even we have believed in Jesus, that we might be justified by the faith** (faithfulness) **of Christ** (In Christ bring forth life in us).

So, we will have the "rightness" of trusting in Jesus, exhibited or put on display or evidence of the fact that trusting God is the right thing. We will have that evidence by Jesus being faithful in that He died and believed the Father was raised from the dead, and in His faithfulness in bringing forth what God wants Him to bring forth in your life, we will have that by HIS faithfulness.

So, I want to say to you that the only faithfulness that there is from our side is to say that we are not going to be faithful to our good works or to the law. We are going to be faithful in trusting that it is easy and for free by Him! That is what I believe that Paul is saying there.

Let me read it again: **16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might** (have the life He has promised manifested in us) **by the faith** (faithfulness) **of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."**

I was thinking about this a lot this morning as well as yesterday about how this works. You know that no living human being living today can live without making use of death. You might say, "What do you mean? This sounds very philosophical." Even if you are a vegetarian, you have to kill a plant to live. If you eat meat, you have to kill something to live. There's always a counterbalance. You cannot produce life by yourself that would be eternal. It is impossible. We cannot do it! The only way that we can have life without making use of death is where God has come and conquered death in giving Jesus, entered into death, conquered death, and now provides us with a life that has no beginning and no end, which is eternal in itself.

So, for us to have eternal life, or the fruit of life, the only way that we can have it is by having a source where this life is perpetual and has no beginning and no end. And that is what God has provided inside a human body, inside Jesus Christ, so that we today can say, "I believe in Him for life for I find that in this body and in this natural world, we have a system where things need to be produced. Let's say, animals, chickens, whatever, need to be produced and then they need to die and then we feed ourselves to remain alive. We find that in this world's system, it is impossible for us to attain to eternal life because something is going to die in order for us to live. Then, in that process, we are actually making use of death to live. We are human beings and in ourselves we are dying and you cannot produce life from death! You might say, "But God produced life from death in the death of Jesus Christ." No, it didn't work that way. God entered death and conquered death on account of the eternal life that is in Him. His eternal life conquered death in humanity and we who trust and rely upon Him, we find that He justifies us with His life.

We are going to skip some of the verses because they talk about the law and I think we have a good understanding of that. We will just go to **Galatians 2:20** where Paul is basically saying, "***I am crucified with Christ*** (What he is actually saying is, "The system where I find life by the flesh, has died in Christ): ***nevertheless I live;***

He is saying, "***I was crucified with Jesus.***" That means, "In Jesus, this Judaism and separation between Jew and Gentile, and also the system where the flesh has life unto death, was crucified in Christ. That means that when Jesus died, the system where I am justified by my works, died there. I, Paul, as a Jew, have died in Christ but here I find that I, Paul, am having a life but the life that I have now is not I who live. It is not Paul, or Saul, the Jew, obeying commands whereby he has conquered sin in his life. He is actually saying that what is happening now since I believe in Jesus, I died with Him. He was raised from the dead. Therefore, the new life that I am raised up into, that I am living, is on account of Christ as the ruler over what was destroying me. It is actually the proof that Christ has condemned sin in the flesh and therefore, you are now seeing life in my flesh... life manifesting in my flesh." That is Christ in Paul.

I want to end by saying this: When we say, "It is not I who live but it is Christ who lives in me", we are basically saying that the life that I now live is the effect that the bodily resurrection of Jesus has on my life. As I rely upon this to conquer the death in my flesh and the sin in my flesh, leaving you at a place where you have now entered and you are starting to enter the very rest of God.

The rest of God is, basically, the rulership where God is standing in. in Christ. Rest should be seen as a King that has conquered a certain kingdom and now, since He's conquered that kingdom and defeated the enemy, He is now resting from war and He is now actively busy in establishing His way of doing, or His order, in that new country. So, we are now at a place where we are seeing the rest of God. God has rested from the war in conquering death and now, those who believe upon Him, He is now implementing, through the Holy Spirit, His order in those people's lives, which is the order of life and not the order of death! Amen!

I trust that this message has brought to you how simple it is to have fruit in your life. I will summarize it quickly this way: Fruit bearing is the result of God justifying in you with His life as you simply trust Him. It is not something you do to find a place in heaven! Amen!