

Varieties of Jesus' Fruit

Galatians 5:13-26 and Others

January 18, 2026

Grapes? Figs? Today, we're talking about apples. When is an apple grouchy? When it's a crab apple. Why did the apple cry? Its peelings got hurt. And of course, what's worse than finding a worm in your apple? Finding half a worm. On the count of 3, I want each of you to say what your favorite variety of apple is. I'm a red delicious guy but I also like Jonathan and others including the kind that throws the best parties, Galas. How many varieties of apples are there? According to Washington State University, there are over 7500 different varieties of which only about 100 are grown commercially. How you like them apples? And that's just apples. It doesn't include all the different types of fruits like grapes and pears and fig and etc. Today, we're going to be talking about varieties of good fruit that last. Please open your Bibles to Galatians 5.

Since the first of the year, we've been talking about our theme for 2026 which is what? Bearing Fruit for Jesus. So far we looked at Jesus' direct command for us to bear fruit that lasts in John 15. We learned that Jesus is the True Vine, His Father is the Gardener, and Christians are the branches. He said it to His Father's glory that we bear much fruit that will last! He also warned against fruitlessness that would result in being cut off and burned up.

Last week we realized the seriousness of this as we looked at Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Monday when He cursed the fig tree for not bearing fruit and it withered by the next morning. In between, we saw the direct application of this real-life parable as He cleansed the temple throwing out those who not only weren't bearing any good fruit, but instead were bearing much bad fruit. I came across some information in one of my study Bibles this week that said it's not uncommon for figs to actually bear two crops of fruit. A smaller crop when the leaves first come out in the Spring, and then the normal full crop in the fall. So even though it wasn't the season for the heavy harvest, it wasn't unreasonable for Jesus to look for a fig or two that spring morning outside Jerusalem.

All that to say Jesus is serious about His followers bearing good fruit for Him. The last two weeks you may have been convinced and want to produce His fruit, but you're asking for specifics. Grapes, figs, what is Jesus really talking about? I'm glad you asked, because today, we're going to get specific. If you are able, please stand as we read from Galatians 5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. 14 The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 15 If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. 16 So I say, live

by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. 17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. 19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 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.

22 **But** the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

How's that for a list of good fruit that will last? Paul doesn't leave us guessing. And Jesus didn't either for you'll remember in John 15, He mentioned one of these same fruits 7 times, what was it? Love! And verses 13-14 stress the importance of bearing the fruit of love by serving each other and by loving our neighbors as ourselves. And it's the first one he mentions in verse 22. The great preacher HA Ironside once said, "Love is as characteristic of the real Christian as apples are characteristic of an apple-tree." That means if we're true Christians, we can't help but love any more than an apple tree can keep from bearing apples.

But it's not the only fruit Paul mentions and we'll look at some of the others in a minute, but I do want to look at Paul's commentary leading up to his list. In vs 16, he tells us to live the Spirit. Say Spirit. The Holy Spirit. If Jesus is the true vine, and the Father is the Gardener, we might think of the Holy Spirit as the Vine's sap. He is the energy, the power, the life of God flowing into and through us enabling us to produce good lasting fruit. And if we live in the Spirit, we will automatically produce what the Spirit desires and inspires, what the Spirit grows on willing branches. There is no way a Spirit-filled branch can produce sinful rotten fruit like those he lists in verses 19-21. Horrible things. Wicked acts. Destructive attitudes and deeds. Sometimes the best way to understand a concept is to consider its opposite and if we want to better understand good fruit, we need to think for a bit about bad fruit. Fruit that grows not on the True Vine, but on the devil's weed, the devil's honeysuckle, his poison ivy.

When is an apple not an apple? When it's a pineapple! Another kind is the manchineel (Man-sha-neal). The manchineel tree is the most poisonous tree in the world and is often called the tree of death. It grows in Florida, Central and South America and the Bahamas. Its name means little apple because the fruit and leaves resemble those of an apple tree. But that's as far as it goes. Its sap, which is present in the leaves, bark and fruit, produces blisters and worse. Just standing under one of these trees when it's raining will cause your skin to blister. In some locations they even post warning signs on the trees. Some early explorers cut some of the trees down, got sap in their eyes and were blind for days. If you eat the fruit, it is sweet at first, I'm told, followed by burning and

tightness, then severe gastroenteritis, bleeding, shock, bacterial superinfection, and eventually death. Anybody want a bite? Many now call the tree manzanilla de la muerte, or 'little apple of death'. I'm afraid we've all eaten it for it is a perfect reminder of sin, of sexual immorality, drunkenness, and the rest that Paul mentions, all of which seem very delicious at first, but end in suffering, pain and hell itself. It reminds me of tree of knowledge of good and evil in Eden.

The manchineel tree is a perfect illustration of the acts of the sinful nature, produced by the sap of sin: "sexual immorality (any sex outside of one man and one woman who are married to each other), impurity and debauchery; idolatry, witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, 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." So while we are not under the Old Testament Law, the presence of the Spirit's sap within us will not produce manchineels. In Matthew 7, (16-20) Jesus said, "16 By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17 Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree **cannot** bear bad fruit, and a bad tree **cannot** bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Thus, by their fruit you will [know] them."

Don't tell us you're a Christian if you're producing the fruit of the sinful nature. Manchineel trees do not produce granny smiths! Will we sin from time to time? Sure. Will we sometimes struggle with sins on this list? Sure we will. But if we're not struggling against **them**, if we're accepting, excusing, and even celebrating them, it sure seems to indicate we're not even on the True Vine. And Paul is very clear, "those who live like this will **not** inherit the kingdom of God." Oh, but I was baptized, I'm a church member, etc. The Bible says, "those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God," and by the way, there's only one other option you can inheritance and it is hell.

In verse 13, Paul says, "You... were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature..." Use your soil, sunlight, and nutrients not to produce the world's fruit, but lasting good fruit for Jesus! And in verses 22-23, Paul gives us some examples of what that good eternal fruit looks like, "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control." These are some of the varieties of fruit I ask God to help me produce every day, and my family to produce, and the believers here at Antioch to produce, and the CBC to produce. Notice these aren't concrete things like buildings, or meals or clothes or even ministries. They're what's behind the buildings, the ministries, the meals, and the clothes. It's the motivation for these. It's the attitudes and condition of the heart. We've talked about most of these before.

But let's understand that the fruit of the Spirit is different than the gifts of the Spirit. Spiritual gifts which we've mentioned before, like wisdom, tongues, preaching, teaching, miracles, etc. are specific gifts given to specific believers to empower them to produce Spirit fruit. Every believer receives at least one spiritual gift and some of these are listed in I Corinthians 12. But I Corinthians 13 is about love and it stresses how **EVERY** believer should be producing that fruit. So that if someone stands under our tree, they don't get blisters, they get blessings. How much peace, patience, gentleness, etc did your branch produce for Jesus this past week? How much do you want to produce for Him this coming week?

There are many varieties of Jesus' fruit. Paul's list is not exhaustive but suggestive. It gets us started. Say salvation. Salvation is another good fruit, bringing people to Jesus. What's more eternal than that? Jesus often referred to harvesting people into His Kingdom and this is a fruit all believers should be producing. Salvation is the initial fruit that enables a believer to then produce other good fruits. One of which is mentioned by John the Baptist in Matt 3:8. When people were coming to him to be baptized, he told them (and us), "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." Say repentance. Turning away from those acts of the sinful nature Paul lists. Don't just talk the talk, walk the walk. Don't just get baptized, live like Jesus! The fruit of repentance is obedience. Obeying what Jesus said. We can claim we're a branch on Jesus' vine, but in our theme Scripture, John 15, Jesus said, "10 If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love..." If we're **not** obeying Jesus, we are not producing His fruit. Period. Our baptismal promises are like apple blossoms, promises of fruit that is to come. But too often we let our blossoms freeze or get blighted or killed by the fungus of selfishness and don't follow through bearing the fruit of obedience.

The more obedient we are, the more holy we become. Say holiness. Holiness is another fruit every believer should produce. God tells us to be holy for He is holy. Sanctification means becoming like Jesus and we should become more holy like Him. Closely related to holiness is righteousness. Say righteousness. Phil 1:11 says we should be "filled with the **fruit of righteousness** that comes through Jesus Christ - to the glory and praise of God." And Eph 5:8-11 says, "For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) 10 and find out what pleases the Lord. 11 Have nothing to do with the **fruitless** deeds of darkness, but rather expose them." If the Holy Spirit is coursing through us like sap through a grape branch, we should be producing the fruit of righteousness. Clusters of it. Righteousness means obeying God and doing what is right. Living right. Thinking right. Loving right. Serving right.

Now the key nutrient required to produce sanctification, righteousness, and holiness, is God's Word. Jesus prayed that the Father would sanctify us by His truth, and then He said, "Your Word is truth." So stay in the word, I'll preach the word, our SS teachers and Bible Study leaders will teach the Word. And as God's Word dwells in us

richly, the Holy Spirit will use it to ripen our holiness, sanctification, and righteousness. You can't pour gasoline on a fig tree and expect it to produce figs. We can't feed our faith with porn or materialism, or pride, or anger and expect to produce good fruit. We have to fertilize it with the Word.

Hebrews 13:15 mentions another variety of eternal Jesus fruit. It says, "let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the **fruit of lips** that confess his name." What is the fruit of lips? Say Praise! Glorifying God! Glorification is another variety of eternally good fruit. Jesus mentioned glorification 8 times in the upper room. Whenever we glorify and praise God in our praying, in our speaking, in our singing, in our eating or drinking, in our working, in our driving, in our worship, or in whatever we do, it is an eternal good fruit for Jesus! Even if no one gets saved (and we pray they do), even if there is no other obvious outward sign (and we pray there is), if God is glorified in our worship, we have produced good fruit that will last!

Another variety of Spirit-fruit is edification. Say edification. To edify means to build something up. What are we to edify? 1 Thess 5:11 in the KJV says, "Edify one another, even as ye do." The NIV says, "encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." We are to build each other up in Jesus! Did you build anyone else up this past week? With your words, with your gratitude, with your support, with your prayers, with your encouragement? Things that don't get built up fall down and the same happens with people. Let us bear Jesus' fruit of edification by building up other believers.

Paul mentions yet another variety of spiritual fruit in Colossians 1:10 where he says, "And we (ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding) **in order that** (so that-not that you can win Bible trivia, not even so that you can teach others, but so that) you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: **bearing fruit in every good work...**" Say good works. As we have said many times our good works will never save us, never earn us a ticket to heaven, but if we **are** saved by Jesus' blood, we'll do His good works. By our fruit, they'll know us. Good works is a big umbrella under which many things are included and I'm thankful for so many of you that are involved in many good works for Jesus.

We have looked at many varieties of good fruit that will last this morning not all. These are fruits that we all should be producing each day in our lives as well as in our church. Good orchardists and gardeners are thankful for what is produced, but they're constantly looking for limiting factors. What is preventing more fruit from being produced? Moisture? Sunlight? Nutrients? What? So I ask you, what is keeping you from bearing more fruit for Jesus? What needs to happen to maximize your fruit production, both individually and as a congregation. Ask God to reveal that to you in a minute when we pray.

Each of you should have received a cluster of paper grapes today with a hanger. What I'd like you to do this week, with the listing today of many types of good fruit Christians can and should produce, between now and next week, write at least one of these spirit fruits on your cluster that you are producing and then bring it back and we're going to present our fruit to Jesus during next week's worship service. We're giving them to you today to think about, consider, pray, and then to return next week as a special offering to God. You may list several of these, that's fine. Remember, not spiritual gifts, but a spiritual result, attitudes and deeds like we've mentioned today. Look over your inserts. Fruit you are producing or want to produce for your Savior.

Right now, as we pray, ask God to reveal what fruit you are producing as well as whatever may be limiting your fruit production.