

The Heights Baptist Church * Sermon Series: Doctrine

*** Topic: The Holy Spirit–Fruit and Gifts * Gal.5:22-26, Rom. 12:3-8, 1 Cor. 12:4-13 * 3/22/26 ***

MAIN POINT

Two parts of the Holy Spirit’s ministry include giving spiritual gifts to all believers, and developing spiritual fruit in the lives of all believers who are abiding in Jesus Christ, who is the vine.

INTRODUCTION

What is one thing you wish you had the ability to do better?

Think of your brothers and sisters serving at the Heights. Which of these people’s spiritual gifts do you especially appreciate?

Most of us look up to someone else in areas where we see that they are more gifted or talented than we are. But God has gifted each of us as He sees fit, so that we can serve the church exactly the way the church needs us to serve.

Note to study leader: In today’s lesson, we will continue our doctrine series with our second lesson on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. In our first lesson, we considered the Holy Spirit’s work and ministry. This lesson continues by looking at the fruit of the Spirit, and then the gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit, and finally a closer look specifically at the gift of tongues.

UNDERSTANDING

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ GALATIANS 5:16-21

Compare and contrast the works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit.

If we are made alive by the Spirit, why do we still struggle with sin?

At the moment when we place our trust in Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit, and God gives us a new nature. Our sinful nature no longer needs to have control over us. However, we live in a fallen world and remain in a battle against sin even after we become Christians. As long as we live, we will continue in this battle. In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul presented examples of “the works of the flesh” (v. 19) that give evidence that we are still walking in the flesh and are not following the Spirit.

What does it mean to walk by the Spirit? What does this look like in our daily lives?

Walking by the Spirit means active, daily, submission to the Spirit’s work in our lives and the Lordship of Jesus Christ. God makes His grace and strength available to us, helping us say “No” to the flesh and “Yes” to God (Titus 2:11-12). We cannot defeat the flesh using fleshly effort alone; we need the Spirit’s help. As we walk with the Spirit daily, we become more conformed into the image of Christ (Col. 3:5; Rom. 8:29). Paul describes this by saying that through Jesus our flesh and its desires have been crucified (Gal. 5:24). We no longer need to obey our flesh through the Spirit of God who is at work in our lives.

What is the significance of Paul’s warning in verse 21?

People whose lives consistently demonstrate the works of the flesh are not following the Spirit and may not be truly saved (2 Cor. 13:5; 1 Peter 1:10-11). Conversely, the Spirit’s activity in Christians produces a cluster of virtues that gives evidence believers belong to Christ (1 John 1:6-7).

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ GALATIANS 5:22-26

How does the fruit of the Spirit in verses 22-26 compare to the works of the flesh?

What do each of the fruit of the Spirit have in common with each other?

Looking at verse 26, what should our attitudes be as Christians?

Paul called for the Galatian believers to follow the Spirit's leadership rather than the flesh. The Spirit's presence in our lives helps us to grow to become more like Christ.

What did Paul mean when he wrote, "Against such things there is no law" (v. 23)?

Paul began this list with love. All of these attributes are rooted in love. While the law was given to restrain the works of the flesh, there is no law against the fruit of the Spirit because there is no sin in the fruit of the Spirit.

How would you summarize what we've discussed about the fruit of the Spirit?

The Greek word translated as "fruit" is singular, not plural. So the Spirit develops all of these nine attributes in our lives as one fruit. And we saw this fruit doesn't automatically develop in our lives as Christians. The Spirit grows this fruit in our lives as we walk with Jesus and submit to Him.

THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ ROMANS 12:3-10

What do verses 6 to 8 tell us about spiritual gifts?

We have different gifts, based on God's grace, which means we don't earn them. God decides which gift or gifts we receive. These gifts are qualities such as serving, teaching, and encouraging each other. And we are to use these gifts to serve the church.

Considering verses 4-5, what points is Paul making with the illustration of the body?

Together we form one body, and each individual part serves a different necessary function.

Paul surrounded these verses on spiritual gifts with a discussion on humility (verse 3), and love (verses 9 and 10). How do these virtues relate to the use of spiritual gifts in the church?

We may tend to compare our gifts with the gifts of others. This can lead to sinful attitudes such as jealousy, envy, or pride.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-27

How do these verses complement what we read in Romans?

Many of the same points are made. The Corinthian congregation was deeply divided. They were still walking in their old natures (1 Cor. 3:1-4). They were divided because they saw their spiritual gifts as more impressive or less impressive than the others. Paul again uses the illustration of the body. These verses strengthen the idea that we together form one body, and we have different gifts to serve the church in different ways. It also reinforces the truth that the Holy Spirit determines which gifts we receive. And unlike the fruit of the Spirit, which develops as we walk with Christ, these gifts are given to all believers, even those "carnal" Corinthians.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE GIFT OF TONGUES

Note to study leader: For more information, see the Commentary section on the gift of tongues.

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ 1 COR. 12:27-30 AND 1 COR. 14:1-39

Based on 1 Cor. 14:2, 14-16, and 27-28, what functions does the gift of tongues serve?

It is a prayer language between the person's spirit and God. God also can use this gift to give a message to the church, as long as there is an interpreter.

Based on these verses, what principles should we as a Christians and as a church apply to the exercise of the gift of tongues?

- **1 Cor. 12:27-30:** Not everyone has the gift of tongues.
- **1 Cor. 12: 31, and 1 Cor. 14:1-5, 15-17:** The church should seek the greater gifts such as prophecy that edify the church (and tongues generally is not in this category).
- **1 Cor. 14:18-19, 23:** It is much better to speak intelligible words in church than to speak in tongues.
- **1 Cor. 14: 26-33:** If the use of the gift of tongues is allowed in church, it must be restricted, and there must be an interpreter, or the person speaking in tongues is out of line.
- **1 Cor. 14:39-40:** Don't forbid speaking in tongues.

How would you summarize these principles about the gift of speaking in tongues?

Don't seek this gift. Don't forbid the use of this gift. This gift is best exercised in personal prayer with God. In church, it is better to speak using intelligible words. If this gift is allowed in church, it is to be regulated, and there must be an interpreter.

APPLICATION

THREE DO'S

(In or last lesson on the Holy Spirit, we looked at three "don'ts". Don't resist the Holy Spirit, don't quench the Holy Spirit, and don't grieve the Holy Spirit. This week we will look at three "Do's".

ASK VOLUNTEERS TO READ THE FOLLOWING THREE VERSES

What do these verses tell us about how we as Christians are to interact with the Holy Spirit?

- **Galatians 5:16:** Do walk in the Spirit
- **Romans 8:6:** Do be controlled by the Spirit
- **Ephesians 5:18:** Do be filled with the Spirit

Have I slipped back into trying to force myself to grow spiritually via fleshly efforts?

What can I do to better abide in Jesus Christ, so that the Holy Spirit can produce fruit in my life?

Where can I get involved in serving the church, to help me use the gifts the Holy Spirit has given me to help build up the body of Christ?

PRAYER

Thank God for pouring out the Holy Spirit on the church. Thank God for the Spirit is developing fruit in our lives, and for the gifts He has given to each of us. Help us to use them to build up the body of Christ.

COMMENTARY

Notes on the gift of tongues (1 Corinthians 14)

There are widely different views about the gift of tongues. A large part of the difficulty is that there isn't a large teaching passage in the Bible discussing this gift. There are historical passages on its use in the book of Acts, and the fairly lengthy rebuke given by Paul to the Corinthian church on the misuse of this gift.

On the one side, there are those who believe that if you don't have this gift, you haven't received the Holy Spirit—or at least aren't filled with the Spirit. This is based largely on its use in the book of Acts.

One hermeneutical principle we need to apply as Christians to the account in Acts is to be careful not to confuse historical passages in the Bible with teaching passages. The book of Acts talks about the unique time in history when the promised Holy Spirit was first poured out on the church, originally the Jewish church in Jerusalem, and then at the start of the gentile church.

On the other side, there is the view that the gift of tongues is no longer being distributed by the Holy Spirit in the church today. This is based largely on 1 Cor. 13:8-10, which says the gift of prophecy, the gift of tongues, and the gift of knowledge will cease “when that which is perfect has come”.

It is thought in this view that this refers to the completion of the New Testament. The problem with this view is that the context of “that which is perfect” appears to be the second coming of Christ to establish His millennial kingdom when we see Christ face to face (1 Corinthians 13:12)

Another hermeneutical principle we need to apply as Christians to Paul's message to the Corinthians is to consider the historical context that coincides with a passage. The Corinthian church was struggling with issues of division and pride. And they were misusing this gift as a way to show off and draw attention to themselves during the worship service.

1 Corinthians 12:4-27

12:4-11a The Spirit according to His will distributes a diversity of gifts to the body for its common benefit. Verses 4-6 and the beginning of verse 11 have a variety of wordplays that frame this section.

12:4-6 . The same triune God brings about a variety of gifts and manifests diverse ministries within the corporate body. The different gifts... ministries, and activities within the unified church reflect the essential unity and unified work of the persons of the Godhead (vv. 6,11,24,27-28)—the same Spirit, the same Lord, the same God.

Paul spoke of gifts in association with the Spirit, service (“ministries” NASB, NKJV) in conjunction with the Lord Jesus, and working (“effects” NASB; “activities” NRSV, NKJV) in association with God the Father. Diversity and unity coexist. There are different kinds of gifts, different kinds of service, and different kinds of working. Yet each variety is associated with a person of the Trinity: the same Spirit; the same Lord; or the same God. The authorization by the triune God indicates the unity that exists within the great varieties. The three terms—gifts, service, and working—relate closely to one another, but they are not synonymous. Each item is the source of the one that follows: service comes from gifts, and working from service. The term gifts appears frequently in this epistle with reference to the various manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. The gifts of the Spirit empower each Christian to function in the body of Christ. Service derives from terminology that Paul used frequently to describe a variety of ministerial activities occurring within the church (diakonia).

“Working” (energema) is an uncommon noun in the New Testament. Its verb form generally connotes effectual work. Thus, it may be better to translate the noun as “results” or “effects” rather than as “working.” Although humans perform services in the church, only God the Father brings about the results.

Not only is there diversity in unity, but also broad distribution of gifts. God causes all these results “in all men.” In other words, all kinds of people—men, women, old, young, Jew, Gentile—receive gifts of the Spirit and perform ministries in the church through which God produces results. The Old Testament prophet Joel predicted this democratization of the Spirit’s blessings (Joel 2:28–29), and Peter saw this Old Testament hope fulfilled in the church (Acts 2:17–18).

Paul’s outlook spoke powerfully to the Corinthian church because some believers felt that their particular gifts (especially tongues) were more important than others. Because all Christians are part of and necessary to the body of Christ, God blesses all Christians with gifts, ministries, and results.

12:7. Paul elaborated on the themes of unity, diversity, and distribution, first stating that God gives a manifestation of the Spirit to each person. The Holy Spirit is the down payment or guarantee of every believer’s future inheritance (Eph. 1:13-14). So all believers receive the Spirit. Paul did not speak only of the Spirit’s indwelling presence here, but also of the manifestation of the Spirit. This terminology indicates that every believer has some display of the Holy Spirit’s presence in his or her life. Also, the manifestation of the Spirit has a particular goal: the common good (1 Pet. 4:10). The gifts of the Spirit are not principally for the edification of the individuals who receive them, but for the good of all believers.

Each demonstration of the Spirit in a believer is given by God for the mutual benefit of the whole body of believers (cp. vv. 12-31). “Demonstration of the Spirit” refers to gifts, ministries, and activities made possible by the Spirit’s enabling power. Similar lists of spiritual gifts are given in verse 28; Rm 12:6-8; Eph 4:11; and 1Pe 4:10-11.

12:8-11 As part of a renewed mind, the Christian is to think wisely about himself and what his function is to be in the body of Christ (the church; see 1Co 12:12-28). Measure of faith may mean a person should measure himself by the gospel. Others see it as different apportionments of faith. Either way, Paul exhorts Christians to be humble and to use what God has given for the good of the body. Based on Rm 12:3; 1Co 12:8-10; Eph 4:11; 1Pe 4:10, Christians are given gifts to use for the good of others.

The NT lists at least 17 kinds of gifts. Christians are defined not just by their personal faith but also by their inclusion in local faith fellowships that are expressions of the body of Christ (see 1Co 12:12-31). Only some of the gifts are explained in this present passage. Prophecy in the NT churches was direct revelation from God before the canon was completed. This gift was to be used and measured in concert with the objective body of Christian truths. Service (Gk diakonia) is the origin of the word “deacon.” A deacon here is not a member of a board of directors but a servant. It describes not a title or office but a gift of ministry. Pastors should have this gift. Teaching is an essential gift. Parents teach children, older believers teach younger believers, vocational pastor-teachers are the primary instructors in a church, and elders should be able to teach also. All believers can teach to some level, but those who have a special facility for teaching are responsible to develop and utilize it. Exhortation is the gift of motivating and encouraging. This gift is similar to the Holy Spirit’s function. Giving is to be done with generosity. All can give, but capacities differ. Some delight to give out of very small means (Mk 12:41-44); others give a “reverse tithe”—they give 90 percent and live on 10 percent. Mercy is helping the sick, the poor, and the sorrowful. This gift is to be exercised with cheerfulness. Practical assistance to needy members was a main emphasis of the early churches. This same emphasis should characterize churches today.

12:12 Christ is compressed language for “the body of Christ,” the church (cp. vv. 27-28).

12:13 To illustrate that individual believers become identified as one body of Christ (i.e., as the unified church), Paul borrowed imagery from the practice of dying various cloths by immersing them in the same dye vat. All believers are baptized into one body and are made to drink of one Spirit.

Galatians 5:16-26

5:16. The phrase “so I say” alerts the Galatian readers that Paul was about to make an important point. His following instructions are designed to combat the selfish behaviors and abuses prominent in the Galatian fellowship (v. 15). The verb translated “live” literally means “walk.” It refers to journeying through life. Paul commonly used the term to designate daily conduct or lifestyle. Along the pathway of life, the Spirit’s guidance and power can help Christians avoid the self-destructive tendencies of the sinful nature. Paul followed his command with a promise: Ordering our lives according to the Spirit’s guidance will prevent believers from ever carrying out the desire of the “flesh.” In the context of Galatians 5:16, the term “flesh” refers to people’s lower nature. Coupled with the word for “flesh,” the term for “desire” conveys the sense of craving what is evil. Consistently living in the Spirit would enable believers to overcome sin’s pull, which the law could not do.

5:17. Every Christian is a walking civil war. Flesh and Spirit are in perpetual conflict; they are diametrically opposed to each other and vie for dominance in believers’ lives. What the flesh desires is antagonistic to what the Spirit desires for Christians. The language is that of unrelenting warfare for control of believers’ lives. The Spirit strives to prevent believers from giving in to evil; the flesh tries to thwart the Spirit’s work.

5:18. Paul emphasized that active cooperation with the Spirit and constant reliance on His power would enable the Galatian believers to experience freedom instead of bondage. If they consistently followed the Spirit’s leadership, they would not be under the law. Paul’s words indicate he was following up on his emphasis of not misusing Christian freedom and elaborating on how to use it properly (see vv. 13-15). The Judaizers contended that obeying the law enables people to overcome their base desires; yet Paul knew from experience that the law was powerless to suppress people’s lower nature (see Rom. 7:7-8, 14-25). Paul maintained strongly that only following the Spirit’s guidance could enable people to overcome evil and experience the freedom of grace. The inner struggle between believers’ old nature and the Spirit would continue, but following the Spirit’s leading—walking behind Him—would empower them to be victorious.

5:19. Paul spelled out the results of acting on “the desires of the flesh” (v. 16). He cataloged the works of the flesh. The word “works” refers to what issues from living in the flesh—people’s lower natures. Paul stated these works are apparent. Paul used 15 Greek words and one catchall term to present characteristic activities of people who are outside God’s kingdom and devoid of the Spirit’s leadership. All the impulses or drives Paul included are potentially good, but the base nature seeks to distort and pervert them. Paul began listing what the flesh produces by naming three sexual sins. Sexual immorality was epidemic and commonly accepted in the Galatian believers’ environment. They were bombarded with temptations to revert to their former immoral lifestyles. Paul emphasized that sexual sins issue from our sinful nature’s aggression in its warfare with the Spirit.

5:20a. Paul next addressed works of the flesh in the religious realm. The word “idolatry” referred primarily to worshiping pagan gods—false gods that people fashioned. Such worship often included sexual immorality. Broadly defined, idols are anything or anyone (including themselves) that people put in God’s rightful place in their lives. Following the Spirit’s leadership inspires life-giving, life-sustaining worship of God. Following the lower nature’s impulses results in false, powerless religion.

5:20b-21. Paul’s third category of the flesh’s works related to people’s interactions. Significantly, he listed sinful attitudes, equating them with sinful acts. In so doing, he listed hatreds first. The Greek word means “hostilities” and has the idea of personal animosities. With the phrase and “anything similar,” Paul lumped other obvious works of the flesh with those he had listed. He again gave the Galatians advance warning: People with lifestyles characterized by the works of the flesh will not inherit God’s kingdom. Inherit means “to share in.” The kingdom of God is His rule, the sphere of His grace. The tense of the word practice conveys habitual performance. People who consistently perform the works of the flesh are not following the Spirit and indeed are not Christians.

5:22-23. Paul contrasted the fruit of the Spirit to the works of the flesh. The word “fruit” refers to virtues only the Spirit can cultivate and bring to full growth in believers’ lives. Human nature apart from God can perform works; only the Spirit can produce fruit. For purposes of study, we can place the virtues in three groups: Christian, social, and personal conduct. The first three virtues in the cluster of the fruit of the Spirit show that only God can generate and maintain His desired harvest in the lives of believers. The second group of virtues in the cluster of Spirit-produced fruit pertains to believers’ relationships with others—their social virtues. The third group of virtues is made up of qualities that believers exhibit in personal conduct. Where the fruit of the Spirit is present, no law is necessary. One purpose of the law was to prevent evil, but Spirit-empowered Christians not only fulfill the law in principle but go far beyond what it requires. The presence of the fruit of the Spirit removes the need for the law’s restraints.

5:24. At the time of conversion, genuine believers put to death (have crucified) the old nature by the Spirit’s power. Those who belong to Christ are people who have placed faith in Him. At conversion, the war with the flesh’s passions and desires—evil prompting and cravings—has been won. Skirmishes between the old nature and the Spirit’s leading continue, but believers’ ultimate victory is assured.

5:25. The phrase “if we live by the Spirit” does not express doubt. The Greek construction expresses certainty: “Because we live by the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit is the source of our new spiritual life, so we must also follow Him. The Greek word rendered “follow” means “to proceed in a row,” “to go in order,” thus “to walk” in another’s steps. It has the further sense of moving toward a goal. Paul exhorted the Galatian believers to order their lives by relying daily on the Spirit’s guidance. Doing so would result in a Christian lifestyle exhibiting exemplary attitudes and actions.

5:26. Paul ended this section of his letter with an exhortation. Literally, he called on the Galatian Christians to stop some destructive attitudes. These attitudes were products of the flesh; they were not evidences of living by the Spirit.