

## The Fruit of the Spirit is Peace

Galatians 5:22

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### Radio Transcript:

What is true peace and how can we experience it in our turbulent world? Find out on Changed by Grace. Welcome to Changed by Grace, I'm Pastor Steve Herford. Today we are looking again at Galatians 5.22, examining peace as a powerful fruit of the Spirit.

How does the Holy Spirit cultivate a tranquil heart that surpasses all understanding? Let's find out today as we study together from God's Word. Please take your Bibles this morning and turn to Galatians chapter 5. Galatians chapter 5, we're looking again at verse 22. We have been in a series on bad and good habits and we've already identified the bad habits and now we're looking at the good habits and we've also labeled it good fruit and bad fruit.

And we get that from this passage here in Galatians 5, verses 22 and verse 23. This gives us the list of the fruit of the Spirit. Now I want to remind you that verses 22 and 23 are a contrast to verses 19 through 21 where he talks about the deeds of the flesh.

The deeds of the flesh are evident, then he lists them. He also gives a warning in verse 21 that those who practice these things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But in contrast to the deeds of the flesh, we now have the fruit of the Spirit.

And this is one fruit given by the Holy Spirit of God to every yielded child of God. You'll notice down in verse 22 he says, but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such things there is no law.

And the reason why he ends it that way, against such things there is no law, is because you do not want to restrain the activity of the Spirit, but you do want to restrain the deeds of the flesh. Now we've already looked at love and joy, and today we're looking at peace. Peace is certainly a coveted item today.

When I was teaching in school, all of the kids that I was involved in their lives had not known our world as a world without war. War began before they were born, and all their upbringing so far, they've heard nothing but wars in other countries, and of course terrorism, and terrorism in different places in our country, even though some of the leaders are reluctant to call it that. But there is coming a day when a world ruler known as the Antichrist will secure a temporary peace for the world, and that will be basically between Israel and the surrounding nations.

But three and a half years into that peace treaty, he will break it by going into the newly rebuilt temple. He will set up a throne and proclaim himself to be God. Second

Thessalonians 2 verses 3 and 4 says it this way, Let no one in any way deceive you, for it will not come unless the apostasy comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction, who opposes and exalts himself above every so-called God or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, displaying himself as being God.

That's future. That again is the Antichrist coming in in the midway of that treaty with Israel and breaking that treaty. First Thessalonians 5.3 says, While they are saying, Peace and safety, then destruction will come upon them suddenly like labor pains upon a woman with child, and they will not escape.

Now of course this is not the peace that Paul is talking about here in Galatians 5. But as I said, peace is a coveted item for everyone. Even if you live next door to someone whom you haven't had peace with, you would like to have peace. You would like to have it when you didn't have any disturbances going on around you.

Peace again is something that we all desire. But the peace that Paul is talking about here in Galatians 5 is an inner peace. This is what Paul calls in Philippians 4.7 the peace of God.

It's that inner calm, that tranquility, that free from disturbance, again that calmness. And even in Philippians 4.7 it's the peace of God that surpasses all understanding and it guards your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. So it transcends human intellectual powers.

It transcends analysis and insight and understanding. God's peace is a transcendent calm that lifts the believer above the most debilitating trial. And of course the real challenge of the Christian life is not to eliminate every unpleasant circumstance.

It is to trust in the good purpose of our infinite, holy, sovereign, powerful God in every difficulty. And those who honor him by trusting him will experience the blessings of his perfect peace. And that's why I keep saying when you look at this in verses 22 and 23, this is what the Spirit of God gives every believer.

This is what the Spirit of God produces in every believer's life. But the key is we have to be yielded to the Spirit. And it's as I said, it's so absolute you're either filled with the flesh or you're filled with the Spirit.

It's one or the other. I wish that we were all filled with the Spirit all the time. But we would be perfect if that was the case, right? And we still have the presence of this vile flesh.

We walk around in this sinful carcass that we have to deal with. And so therefore we have to restrain that flesh and we have to yield to the Spirit of God. Now let me just say some things about peace.

A little bit more than what I've already said. God is the God of peace. He's the author of peace.

Now he's called the God of peace in Romans 15.33 and 1 Thessalonians 5.23. He's called the God of love and peace in 2 Corinthians 13.11. Even Jesus is called the Lord of peace in 2 Thessalonians 3.16. And he's also called the Prince of peace in Isaiah 9 and verse 6. That Puritan writer Thomas Watson said, God the Father is called the God of peace, God the Son the Prince of peace, and God the Holy Ghost the Spirit of peace. Jesus promised peace. He promised it to his disciples.

You remember that. In John chapter 14 and verse 27 he said to them, Peace I leave with you. Now this comes off the heels of just telling them that he was leaving.

That he was going to go back to the Father. But first he had to go through the highway of the cross. He had to be crucified.

And he would rise on the third day. And he would spend a short period of time with them and then he would ascend back to the Father. And of course they were upset about this.

Because they had spent three and a half years with him. Living and breathing on every word that he said. Hanging on every truth that he gave.

And now he's leaving. You could get used to being around someone for three and a half years. That all of a sudden they're telling you they're going to leave.

Because you know the scripture spoke of his leaving. The scripture spoke of his death and resurrection. But they didn't understand it.

It was veiled from their eyes. And so many times Jesus said to them, Oh ye of little faith. Did he not? But he could say that equally to us, right? But he tells them, Peace I leave you.

My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled nor let it be fearful.

The peace I'm giving is not the kind of peace the world has. Because the kind of peace the world has is not everlasting. It's not permanent.

It's temporary. It's based upon circumstances. And as we've said on all of these so far, none of them are based on that.

They're all unconditional. Love is unconditional. Love is seen by its description rather than by a definition.

And then of course joy. Joy is not based upon circumstances. Whether they're good circumstances or bad circumstances.

They're based upon God being the object of your joy. And that joy comes from God also. Think about that when you go through something difficult.

And think of how you're reacting to it. And if you're reacting to it to that in a negative way and you're thinking, Well this has killed my joy. Well the truth of the reality is it has nothing to do with your joy.

Because you could have joy in the Lord. In God Himself. Regardless of that bad situation.

Now I'm not saying the situation is something to rejoice in. And it probably isn't. Most negative things in our life, those trials, they're not fun.

They're grievous as Peter talks about in 1 Peter. They don't bring joy. So you've got to find another way to deal with this.

James chapter 1 tells us count it or consider it all joy when you encounter various trials. Knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. So you've got to find a way to evaluate this with joy.

And the way you do this is like what Paul says in Philippians 4.4. Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say rejoice. So you've got to have God as your object all the time.

That He is the source and He is the one that will give you that joy. So therefore you have to yield to Him and not yield to this situation. And the same is true with peace.

Jesus gives peace. God gives peace. The Holy Spirit gives peace.

Over in Ephesians 2.14 and following Paul says this, For He Himself, that is Jesus, is our peace who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall by abolishing in His flesh the enmity which is the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one, that is Jew and Gentile, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross by having put to death the enmity. And you know that's exactly what the cross does. It brings two opposing groups together.

And we were that opposing group, weren't we? If we weren't living for Christ and we weren't following Christ, we were opposed to Him. Might not be out there vocally expressing that. But see, all of this is said to be of the fruit of the Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit characterizes the Kingdom of God. This is what the Kingdom of God is about. That's why it's different than what the world can offer.

Again, the world offers something that is temporary. It's not promising anything for the future. It's here and now and it can be gone here and now.

But what God is offering is part of the Kingdom. It characterizes the Kingdom of God.

Listen to what Romans 14, 17 says.

For the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. The context there is speaking about your weaker brother. Your weaker brother is struggling over meats that were sacrificed to idols.

He says, listen, the Kingdom of God is not about all of that, but your liberty certainly is. And your liberty can only go so far as to the weakness of your brother. And if your brother is stumbling over something that you feel at liberty and the Scripture gives you liberty to do, guess what? You're not at liberty to do it now.

I don't know why the libertines like to talk about what they're doing, because talking about it many times creates the struggle for those of us who don't feel we have that liberty to do that. And I have said that to others before and I said, you know, you might feel at liberty to do that and maybe even the Scripture supports that, but I might be weak in that area. And so it would be better for my faith and for my strength is that you don't talk about it.

Just leave it to yourself. So this peace characterizes the Kingdom of God. This fruit that comes from the Spirit.

And if you notice in that list, it mentions joy also. All of this comes from the Spirit. Now notice also, not only does it characterize the Kingdom of God, but it accompanies salvation.

Listen to Romans 5 and verse 1. Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It accompanies our salvation. When we are justified by faith, we now are at peace with God.

We're not enemies any longer. We're at peace. And why? Because of Christ.

We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. William Gurnall says we have peace with God as soon as we believe, but not always with ourselves. You understand that, don't you? Do you remember that when you came to Christ? There are some things that were lifted immediately and you felt the burden come off of it, but then there were other things that you felt like didn't lift so easily and you had to deal with that.

Sometimes I believe that God leaves certain things in our life for us to work on in our sanctification. At least it seems to have been that for me. I know that there were things that were immediately removed from my life, but then there were other things that I had to work on, and it took me months to work on, and a lot of applying Scripture to my heart in those respects.

So when we talk about the fruit of the Spirit and all of this being said to be of the fruit of the Spirit and characterizing the kingdom of God and accompanying salvation, we'd also

then have to say it accompanies faith. Romans 15, 13, now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Again, see the connection? We have been given that hope and joy and peace in believing.

John Flavel says, all other graces like birds in the nest depend upon what faith brings into them. Take away faith and all the graces languish and die. Joy, peace, hope, patience, and all the rest depend upon faith.

The Bible says that we walk by faith, not by sight. But sometimes we tend to do it the other way around, right? Walk by sight, not by faith. I'll believe when I see.

We're like Thomas. Let me see it and then I will believe. But that's not always faith, and that's certainly not always hope.

If you can see it and you have it right in your grasp, then that's not always hope. Hope is what we have the future to look forward to. We have the hope of heaven.

We have the hope of a future inheritance. And just like we've said before, that when you look at all of these that are listed here in Galatians 5, 22, and 23, this is a foretaste of glory divine. This is a foretaste of heaven.

Every time that the Spirit of God manifests Himself in your life as a yielded child of God, you're yielded at that moment, and the fruit of the Spirit is being produced in your life and being manifested, you are manifesting heaven on earth. And that's what people see, and that's what people will witness. And like I said, you get all of them.

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. You get them all. It's one fruit.

It's a multi-flavored fruit, and you get all of it. Believers have inner peace. Again, that's what's given, and that's the difference between the peace of the world.

We have this inner peace. But I should say this, even though we have the inner peace, we should also seek peace. Let me give you some examples of that.

We should love peace. We should be peacemakers. Talk a little bit about the relationships in the home, relationships between spouses.

Somebody's got to be a peacemaker when there's conflict, right? If you have both at odds, there won't be any peace. But somebody's got to be a peacemaker, even if they feel like that they're right and the other one's wrong. But for the sake of peace, you come together, and you put aside your personal feelings, and you let that go so that you can have peace.

Judah was told in Zechariah 8, 19 to love truth and peace. How important is that for us,

that we should love truth and peace? And as believers, we do. We love the truth, and Jesus is the truth, right? Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life.

We love Jesus. He's the truth, and his words are truth. He said that.

John 17, 17, thy word is truth. And so we should love this. Also, believers should seek it.

Psalms 34, 14 says, depart from evil and do good. Seek peace and pursue it. Don't just wait for it to happen, but seek for it.

Pursue it. And as he says there, you've got to depart from evil. Focus on good.

Be overcome with good. Let good overcome the evil, and the evil influences around you, and the things that people do to you that are evil. Seek after peace.

We also should follow it. Not only should we seek it, but we should follow it. 2 Timothy 2, 22 says, now flee from youthful lust and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Here, Paul tells Timothy, this is what you are to do. You are to flee from those youthful lusts, and you are to pursue after righteousness, and faith, and love, and peace. And you're to do it with those who call upon the Lord from a pure heart.

We should have those kind of companions around us, those who fear the Lord, those who are pursuing after these things. If you hang around people that don't pursue these things, guess what? You'll start pursuing them too. You'll be dragged down.

You won't have that strength. You'll find yourself functioning more in the flesh than in the spirit. We need that encouragement.

And I just want to be honest with you and tell you that when we come together, we have an opportunity as a church to encourage each other. And sometimes just by each other's presence and not knowing what's going on in each other's lives, that alone is an encouragement. I don't know everything that you go through, and you don't know everything that I go through.

And we may have had a bad week or a bad night, and we come into here, and it takes everything we got just to get in here. But for others that see you and see your faithfulness, that's an encouragement to them. That presses them on those days when they don't feel like coming, for whatever the reasons are.

Bad week, bad day, bad morning. I don't want to come. I had a bad morning.

I was all ready to go, and something happened, and it just really blew up the morning, and I'm just frustrated, and I'm stressed by it, and I don't know what to do about it other than just say, well, I'm just going to cancel all my plans, and I'm just going to hang out

here. You know, you take the step further. Somebody in our church told me that they took a step further, and they said, I knew I needed to be here, and I came, and I'm glad I came.

See, it's just getting over that hurdle, right? So we have to follow after. We also should follow the things that make for peace. Pursue after those things.

It says in Romans 14, 19, so then we pursue the things which make for peace and for the building up of one another. Listen, if something that I want to do here is going to benefit everybody, and it's going to cause the church to be built up, it's going to promote peace and righteousness and joy and love, then that's what I should pursue. But if it's not going to promote that, I shouldn't pursue it.

If all it's going to do is divide, I shouldn't pursue it. Now, some things take a little bit more time than others, right? Some things that we decide on that we're going to do as a church, maybe we're not ready for it yet. Maybe God is not taking us through that yet, and we need some more time, more time to pray about it, more time to research about it, more time to make sure that we have peace about what we're doing.

We also should cultivate peace. You also should cultivate it. Not only love it, seek it, and follow it, and follow the things that make for it, but you need to cultivate it.

Let me have you turn to Psalm 120. Psalm 120. Some of these psalms are very eye-opening when you look at this, especially in a day and age in which they were written, because they did live with wars every day.

And yes, they would have times of peace. You would read that certainly in the Judges. But here in Psalm 120, it says, Prayer for Deliverance from the Treacherous, a Song of Ascents.

Listen to what it says, only seven verses. In my trouble I cried to the Lord, and he answered me. Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue.

What shall be given to you, and what more shall be done to you, you deceitful tongue? Sharp arrows of the warrior, with the burning coils of the broom-tree. Woe is me, for I sojourn in meekish, for I dwell among the tents of Keter. Too long has my soul had its dwelling with those who hate peace.

I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war. That's a good verse to talk about cultivation, cultivating peace. You're for peace, they're for war.

Do you give in and go for war? Or do you continue with peace? And they here could be his members, because that's what he's talking about, his tongue. They're for war, those members at war within you, and that's certainly true. And also you have, like I said, wars within the region, wars of people wanting to topple Israel, wanting to destroy Israel.



That's today, all the stuff that's going on in the Middle East is all really pointing at Israel, and things that are pointing at us because we're allies with Israel, and they don't like anybody who's allies with Israel. If you're a friend with Israel, then you're just like Israel, and we need to destroy you too. And that's what stuff is going on with the little guy in North Korea.

But peace is something we should cultivate. We should cultivate this. Pursue after those things that bring about peace.

Not only should we do all those things, but we should speak it. We should speak peace. What do you mean by that? And I'm not talking about some of the stuff that's going on in the charismatic circles that you just speak things and you expect it to happen.

I don't think life really happens like that. But we should talk about it. And an example of that is in Esther, the book of Esther, verse 10, or chapter 10 rather, last chapter.

And it ends like this. It says, Now King Azarias laid a tribute on the land and on the coastlands of the sea, and all the accomplishments of his authority and strength, and the full account of the greatness of Mordecai, to which the king advanced him. Are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Medea and Persia? For Mordecai, the Jew, was second only to the king Azarias, and great among the Jews, and in favor with his many kinsmen, one who sought the good of his people, and get this, and one who spoke for the welfare of his whole nation.

See, he was one who spoke about peace as well. And being second in command, he could have a lot of influence in bringing it about. And if you know the story in the book of Esther, Esther was put in a place as the king's wife for such time as this, when you had a wicked man named Haman who wanted to destroy all of the Jews.

And of course, Esther kept her identity from the king until the time had to come for her to reveal that she was a Jew, and Haman was going to kill her and all of her fellow Jews. And you remember the story, the law couldn't be changed, but they could defend themselves. And Mordecai was raised up, God exalted him, Haman was hung on the very gallows that he had built to hang Mordecai.

Pursuing peace, do you have it? Do you have it in your heart? You have it if you have Jesus. He's brought peace between you and the Lord by what he did on the cross. Today's message has been taken from Galatians 5.22, and it's called The Fruit of the Spirit is Peace.

To get your copy of this message, give us a call at 904-651-3351. If you'd like to download the free mp3 from our website, visit us at [www.changedbygrace.org](http://www.changedbygrace.org). Well, I'm Pastor Steve Herford. I want to thank you for listening and hope you'll join us again next time as we study together from God's Word.

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