

Remnant Life Church
January 30, 2022
The Church of the Philippians
Part 4
The Fruit of Self-Control
Phil 1:10-11

Review:

- Paul's prayer in **Phil 1:9-11**
 - A prayer for love
 - A prayer for light
 - A prayer for life

READ – Phil 1:9-11

Paul began this prayer by placing the seed of love

- He taught that the seed must be planted in knowledge and discernment
- A powerful result is that discernment grows
- The growth of love, filled with knowledge and discernment brings with it two characteristics – that of being pure and blameless
 - The word pure is often read as sincere
 - From two Greek words that can translate as revealed in the light
 - The second characteristic is that of being blameless
- IOW – Paul is saying that when love is abounding in a person there should be a tangible difference

That is a difference in the inner character (pure)

And a difference in the outer conduct (blameless)

When those two aspects of our lives are evident because of agape love, it results in a different ultimate product

- The results are the fruits of righteousness (fruits of the Spirit)
- Paul lists those fruits in **Gal 5:22-23** - *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*

This morning, we are going to be looking at just one these fruits of the Spirit

- It caught my eye because of two things
 - First, it was last on the list
 - Second, I haven't heard it talked about very often even though it is very unique
- Self-control

What we understand of these virtues to be important in our lives - love, patience, kindness, goodness and the rest are seen and demonstrated on others outwardly

- Self-control is not that way, and it is the only one
- Self-control goes on inside of me and is demonstrated only on my life

But if self-control is acted on by me and is about me, why is it listed with the other fruits of the Spirit?

- Is it not, by its very name and definition, self-generated?
- It has little to do with others, and certainly not in the way the other fruits impact those around us
- If we utilize the world's definition of success, self-control plays very heavily into the end result.
 - The self-made man or woman is supposed to demonstrate self-control; they have mastered their desires, their exercise regimen, their eating habits, they have learned to develop and maintain a positive mindset no matter the circumstances, and they excel in time management.
 - Self-control seems to be a very self-centered facet of success.
- But if we call ourselves a Christian, does that not go fully contrary to the understanding that God is in control of us through the surrender of our wills to His?
- Shouldn't our desire be for God control rather than self-control? It just doesn't seem to fit as a fruit of the Spirit.

But self-control, is in fact, at the fulcrum of the fruits for it is this that establishes the foundation of the actions of our lives

But this is not easy, for anyone, even Paul

- Look at what Paul says about self-control
 - **Rom 7:15** - *I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.*
 - And then in **Rom 7:19** - *I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.*
- Let's not forget, this is Paul talking here – the author of the fruits of the Spirit
 - And he is not writing this in response to what is happening in one of the churches that comprise the letters of the NT
 - He is speaking about himself!
- But then we read in a letter to the church in Corinth
 - **I Cor 9:26-27a** - *So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should.*
- And then to the church in Galatia
 - **Gal 5:22** - *But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives...*

So which is it?

- On the one hand he can't control himself doing things he should not and not doing things that he should
- Then he is running with purpose in every step training like a champion athlete
- And then acknowledging that it is the Holy Spirit that produces the fruit in our lives
- This guy is all over the place with this!!
 - Was Paul being a hypocrite?
 - Or perhaps when he wrote Romans he was struggling but when he wrote to the churches in Corinth and Galatia he had gotten those things under control

- After all Romans comes well before the books of Corinthians and Galatians
- The only problem with that is the books of the Bible are not all arranged in a chronological order
 - Some are
 - But just as many are not
 - Paul actually wrote the letter to the church in Rome last of those 4 books with Galatians written in the year 49 AD, I and II Corinthians written about 55 and Romans in 57
 - But knowing the order in which the letters were comprised, how does he write on the one hand that he is running with purpose under the guidance of the HS and then later state that he can't control himself or his actions?

Well, Paul was being neither a schizophrenic hypocrite nor one who had figured out the secret of total self-control

- Paul was making the point that we must be aware of human nature
- It is within human nature to want what we want, when we want it, and scream about it until we get it
- IOW, no matter how much it looks like a person has his act together, if he is operating on his own power independent of the Spirit of God in him, he's not really in control at all.
- On the surface he may look calm, but down inside there's a battle of the will going on.
 - That is why the world's definition and process of self-control leading to their desired end of purpose, direction, and success does not ultimately work
 - The desires are always present and regardless of the measure of discipline applied, without God, it will fail and the ugly selfish nature will come to the surface
- The only way this can be overcome is to get rid of the old human nature and take on a new nature
- But true self-control goes against human nature
 - As a matter of fact, for the Christian, in order to gain self-control, you must first be willing to give up your self-control
 - Have I confused you yet?

Here is what I am saying, to be a follower of Jesus Christ, is to take on His nature. To identify with Him.

- Christ was crucified, hung on a cross until he was dead, to pay the price for man's sin.
 - In our identifying with Him the Bible says that we must *crucify ourselves* if we want to be His followers. ([Gal 5:24](#))
 - The Bible doesn't mean that we must literally die a physical death.
 - It means we must do this spiritually
 - We have to nail ourselves to a cross (spiritually)
 - Until we die (spiritually) meaning a full surrender of our will to Him
- In [Rev 3:20](#) we read, *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*
 - And so just as the word knock translates from the original language as knocking, meaning on-going

- So too the surrender of our will is also ongoing
- We must regularly “die” to our own will and give it over to Him
- Why?
 - Because human nature, without the presence of God, in sin, is selfish and wants its own way
 - You may be saying, that is not true – I think we know that is not the way we should live
 - Really? Does a young child need to be taught to want for themselves or to share
 - Go to a pre-school or toddler room and watch the dynamics of how they interact with each other
 - This was the struggle Paul tells the church in Philippi they must continue to wrestle with
- Each of us has those things in our lives that make self-control difficult
 - Paul does not specify his struggles, but he had them
 - I suspect it might have been patience
 - And perhaps speaking harshly to people who were not doing what they should, or were doing what they shouldn't
 - ...just like he did
 - Yours struggles are not the same as mine
- May I encourage you to do three things this morning?
 - Ask God to reveal to you what areas you must guard from losing your self-control
 - Ask someone in your life to help keep you accountable
 - Make a the determination that you are going to be patient
 - Patient with others who struggle with self-control
 - And patient with yourself