

8-21-22 message Fruition – Love 1 John 2:7-11

Last week we intro'd our new series: FRUITION.

-we are going to be looking at the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23 where it says the fruit of the Spirit are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Last week we said we are going to hold these fruit up like a mirror, to see if our lives are bearing evidence that we are walking with his Spirit, following Jesus in our lives.

Our goal is to be honest about where we are, and seek the Lord so that we can be genuine in our faith, not fake. (last week we looked at fruit flavored candy, which is not even close)

-ex. Being real seems to be more important these days, where so much that is out there is manipulated, filtered, or photo shopped. They've come out with an app called "Be Real", to supposedly combat the fakeness of social media. You're supposed to take a photo of wherever you are when the app notifies you and then post it, so your friends can see you being real.

Which sounds fine, until I see my kids trying to figure out where to take their BE REAL pic. What they need is an app that can sense when you're holding your phone up, and just randomly take the shot, without any warning. THAT would be real.

I think the best way to sense whether or not we are being real, or bearing real fruit (not just fruit flavored candy), is to let God's word shine a light on areas of our lives, and see what is really going on.

The apostle John holds up a great mirror for us to look at this first fruit listed, LOVE, in his letter to the church, 1 John.

Read 1 John 2:7-11.

Let's break this down.

v.7 says I am not writing you a new command but an old one.

-people tend to think of the old testament as wrathful, rule based God, who is always right at the edge of just smiting everyone.

-the truth is, God spoke of love in the OT.

Deut. 6:5

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Lev. 19:18

Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord.

Why does this sound so familiar?

- because Jesus quoted this when asked what the greatest commandment was.
- he said the whole scripture hinged on these commands, and he linked them together.

So the command to love has been around. It is actually “old”.

But John states it is new in Christ now.

- He is putting it in a new “light”.

You see this played out in Luke 10.

Read Luke 10:25-29.

Here the expert in the law quoted Jesus to himself.

- he gave the right answer, but Jesus will end up exposing his REAL heart

See, as an expert in the law, he was interested in just “appearing” right.

- what Levitical, religious rules do I need to follow to be appear right?
- who is my neighbor? Who do I HAVE to love?

-ex. This reminds me of the question I used to get as a youth minister a lot. Kids would want to know how far was too far physically in their dating relationships.

-I’d tell them the fact that you’re asking that question, means you want to get as close to the line of sin as you possibly can without sinning.

-that right there is a heart issue.

-I’d ask them to re-think it. What would you want your future wife or husband to be doing with someone else?
Do to others as you would have them do to you.

-Put it in relational human terms.

Jesus responds to the expert with a story, not a set of guidelines.

Read Luke 10:30-36.

The expert then exposes his heart by answering, “The one who had mercy on him.”

- couldn’t even say the word “Samaritan”.
- his heart still had hatred in it towards the people he considered “half-breeds”.

Jesus shined light upon this “fakeness”, and John was there and saw this, and he’s now writing saying that people who hate are still in the darkness.

v.9 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness.

Jesus made the old command to love new.

-He took it to a new level

Look how he does it in this passage.

Read Matt. 5:43-48

Love enemies, those who work against you

Ex. What does this look like? Who are your enemies?

-when someone betrays you; acts like they're a friend, then turns on you

-when someone distances themselves from you; uses you as long as it benefits them

-when someone doubts you; someone just puts you down, doesn't believe in you

Jesus doesn't just talk about it, he lives it.

Read John 13:1-17, 34-35.

Ex. -washing feet / did the job of a common servant (humbled himself)

-of a betrayer: Judas

-of a denier: Peter

-of a doubter: Thomas

Jesus makes an old command to love, new, by taking it up a level.

But look back in 1 John 2, v.10.

-when we love like this, "there is no cause for stumbling"

-we won't cause others to stumble

-they won't throw out the line, "you're just a bunch of hypocrites"

-basically accusing us of being "fake"

When a church begins to truly "love" and be genuine and real, it has real power to affect its community.

v.11 says the one who hates, and doesn't love is in the darkness.

-not a "cool, hip", Batman "dark knight" darkness

-it is a living hell, which is really only a small taste of real hell. Real hell is much worse.

But Jesus didn't desire for us to walk in the darkness. That is why he came as light.

He came to show us what real love looks like.

-not just in his teaching us

-but also in his actions, sacrificing himself for our sin

John 15:13

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Ex.

Pulitzer prize winning author, Jack Kelley, tells this story:

We were in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, in East Africa, during a famine. It was so severe that when we walked into one of the villages everyone was dead. The stench of death gets into your hair, skin, clothes and you just can't wash it off.

At one point we saw this little boy. We could tell he had worms and was malnourished; his stomach was protruding. When a child is extremely malnourished, the hair turns a reddish color, and the skin becomes crinkled as though he's 100 years old.

The photographer had a grapefruit which he gave to the boy. He was so weak he did not have the strength to peel the grapefruit so we cut it in half and gave it to him. He picked it up as if to say thanks and began to walk back to his village.

We walked behind so he could not see - he entered the village and there on the ground was a little boy we thought was dead. His eyes were completely glazed over. It turned out it was his younger brother. The older one knelt down and bit off a piece of grapefruit and chewed it and then opened his younger brother's mouth and put the grapefruit in and began to work the little brother's jaw up and down. We learned that the older brother had been doing this for two weeks.

A couple of days later the older brother died of malnutrition and the younger one ended up living.

After experiencing this, I spent that night thinking -is this what Jesus meant when he said "there is not greater love than to lay down our life for someone else."

We were dead in our sin, almost like that little brother, and Jesus saved us.

-Jesus demonstrated what the greatest love looks like.

He laid down his life to pay for our sin, because of his love for us.

Once we know that love, truly know it in our hearts, we can't help but want to love others in that way.

-This is genuine, authentic, REAL faith. The kind that will bear REAL fruit.

Jesus said, "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

(sing and pray to close)