

Title: The Fierce Fruit of Self-Control (Self-Control - The Fruit of the Spirit sermon series)

Passage: Galatians 5:22-23

Introduction:

- sanctification, the process of being Christ-like is a continual process (which is distinct from justification, which is one-time salvation through Christ in faith).

Philippians 1:6

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

Self-control:

- the anchor to the fruit of the Spirit
- one needs to give diligent attention to the grace of self-control to reflect Christ (J. Bridges)

Passage: Galatians 5:16-25

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 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 those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

- lack of self-control can lead to devastating consequences.

Proverbs 25:28

A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.

- self-control is the Christian's defensive wall. Without it, one is easy prey to the devil.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

- **Question:** What is it for you that area of your life where you struggle to exercise in self-control?

- Potential areas: thoughts, words, spending, eating/drinking, anger, etc.,

- **Question:** What steps, if any, have you taken (or will you take) to address?

Overview:

I. Principle of self-control

II. Problem with self-control

III. God's indwelling Presence and Power for self-control

IV. Prescription for self-control

I. Principle of self-control

- What is it?

- Greek word = it is the controlling power of the will under the operation of the Spirit of God. It is the inner strength to endure and to not act upon impulse.

- exercise of Spirit-empowered inner strength under the direction of sound judgment that enables us to do and think and say what is pleasing to God.

- fierce fruit of self-control (J. Piper)

- self-control implies a fierce battle between the flesh that pulls contrary to what honors/pleases God.

- summary of the kingdom of God: righteousness, *self-control*, and the coming judgment.

- Biblical self-control is multi-faceted. It is control of one's behavior as well as the impulses, emotions, thoughts within. It goes to the deepest parts of us: it involves the heart.

II. Problem with self-control

Question: Why is self-control so difficult for so many of us?

Answer: Our flesh (natural disposition to do what is in opposition to what we know what God wants or is pleasing to Him)

Galatians 5:17

For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

Romans 7:19-20, 24

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me....Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

III. God's indwelling Presence and Power for self-control

- the answer to the problem follows to the very next verse!

Romans 7:25 - 8:1

Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

- there is no condemnation - ever!

Romans 8:2-8

For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*

- the flesh is contrary to God. The flesh, apart from God, cannot please God.

Romans 8:9-11 (Key conclusion of who you are in Christ)

You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- God not only purchased your justification through Jesus' death on the cross but God also purchased your sanctification.

John 8:31-32

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

- Question: Do you know that the Spirit lives within you?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Colossians 1:27

To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

IV. Prescription for change

Four things (ABCD):

1. Acknowledge

- acknowledge the root of your problem - sin

- sin -> what's at the heart? See the middle letter: i (starts at yourself, your desire to call the shots/make the wrongful choice)

Psalm 51 (David's confession)

Psalms 51:4

Against you, you only, *have I sinned* and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

2. Believe

- believe that God in Christ will change me
- how can grow in faith? Read, meditate, lay hold of God's Word

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.

3. Confess

- confess your struggle to another mature believer
- not to anyone or even someone who attends church but a *mature* believer (someone you can trust and who can take you to the Gospel).
- church: not a hotel of saints but a hospital for sinners

James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

- confess your struggle knowing that God would be honored.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

4. Dedicate

- dedicate yourself completely to Christ
- *Question*: have you dedicated yourself (past, present, future; emotions, thoughts, body, etc.)

Romans 6:12-13

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

- We are all controlled by something whether we like it or not (anxiety, fear, anger). But do you choose to be submitted and controlled by Christ?

- self-control is really "Christ-control"

Romans 12:1

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Luke 9:23

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.