

Sermon Series Title: "The Fruit of the Spirit"

Sermon Series Summary: In Christ, we have received new hearts and new life. With this new life, God bears the Fruit of the Spirit. It's not something we do. It's something that God grows within us through His Spirit.

"We are in our "Fruit of the Spirit" sermon series, and through this series, we see that our growth is not quantified by the works we accomplish but is defined by the fruit God's Spirit bears within us through His Son."

Call: Psalm 103:10

Text: Galatians 5:22-23, John 12:1-8

Title: "The Fruit of Faithfulness"

Next Week's Call: Psalm 103:11-12

Next Week's Text: TBD

Next Week's Title: TBD

Future Calls: Psalm 103:13-14, 15-18, 19, 20-22

Future Titles: "The Fruit of Gentleness" (Galatians 5:22-23, 2 Kings 5:1-14), "The Fruit of Self-Control" (Galatians 5:22-23, Genesis 39:1-12)

Fallen Condition Focus: We are not faithful.

Christ redeeming FCF: Christ was and is faithful to us, and now we can be faithful to him and others.

Central Truth: "Let us display faithfulness to God and others through the faithfulness of Christ."

Summary: Faithfulness is courageous trustworthiness to God and others. Its devotion is the same, no matter the effect or the applause. Its opposite is a fair-weather friend, and its counterfeit is a pretense of faithfulness with the heart of selfishness. We are able to be faithful, because of God's faithfulness toward us in Christ.

Reflective Questions:

1. What is the opposite of faithfulness? What is the counterfeit of faithfulness?
2. How do you describe faithfulness to God? To others?

3. Why is faithfulness so difficult? What is our hope to be faithful?

I. Introduction

- A. Hook
- B. Transition- second half of John, last week of Jesus' life (six days before Passover- Saturday before Palm Sunday, six days before cross)
- C. Proposition
- D. Points

II. What Faithfulness Is Not (vv. 4-6)

- A. The opposite of a faithful person is a faithless person.
 - 1. It is someone who follows Jesus and is a friend to others, only when times are good.
 - 2. Judas is a great example of the opposite, as he betrayed Jesus when the leaders were against Him. The disciples are great examples of this as well, as they all abandoned Jesus in His hour of need.
 - 3. This applies to relationships- a fair weather friend or servant; we are friends or servants, only when times are good (Prodigal son's friends).
- B. The counterfeit of a faithful person is a selfish person (selfish service).
 - 1. They put on a pretense of faithfulness, only to receive something in return. Pastor Tim Keller- love without truth; truth without love was goodness' counterfeit
 - 2. Here, Judas is pretending to be faithful in his generosity, but he has been benefiting from this money.
 - a) We may do this as well with our obedience. We pretend to be faithful in our service, but we want the recognition, respect, and approval. We are faithful in our devotionals, but it's all just a way to save ourselves (legalism).
 - 3. We do this in our relationships as well.
 - a) We may be faithful at work, not because we are working for the Lord, but we are working for our pay or our promotion. We may be faithful to our spouse or our children, but we are only using them to fill some void we may have (loneliness, inadequacy, approval, failure, etc.). We may pretend to be faithful to our friends, but we are only using them (fun, favor later, status, comfort, etc.).

III. What Faithfulness Is (vv. 1-3, 7)

- A. Faithfulness ("full of faith") is courageous trustworthiness to God and others. Its devotion is the same, no matter the effect or the applause.

- B. We see faithfulness in Martha, Lazarus, and Mary in our story.
- C. Jesus is making His way to Jerusalem for His death and stops by Bethany, where his beloved friends (Martha, Mary, and Lazarus) lived. He raised Lazarus in the prior chapter and sealed His own fate by this miracle.
- D. They are making dinner for him there.
- E. Martha serves.
 - 1. This is a drastic change from Luke 10, when she was angry with Mary and Jesus. She wanted to impress Jesus with her serving. She was angry with Jesus, because He didn't give her the praise she is due.
 - 2. We see faithfulness in Martha here, as she is serving, without complaining and needing affirmation. She is serving to serve. She is serving, not Jesus, but all people alike, even people who will be her enemy one day, i.e. Judas.
- F. Lazarus communes.
 - 1. Lazarus is also an example of faithfulness.
 - 2. He knows that his existence is evidence of Jesus' power as Lord. He does not hide in fear, even though there are plans to kill him in the subsequent passage.
 - 3. Lazarus' faithfulness to others is his testimony- resurrected and changed life. We don't hear from him in the Gospels. But his testimony is powerful and a blessing to all.
 - 4. His faithfulness is also his communion with Jesus. He is not trying to receive anything from Christ. He is not looking for another resurrection. Christ is the reward, portion, and prize.
 - 5. Faithfulness is a friend that loves you for you, even if they don't receive anything for it... or even if it costs them.
- G. Mary gives sacrificially.
 - 1. It was common for hosts to anoint their guests with oil, in that smelly culture (hot, sweaty, dirty, no refrigeration, seldom showers). But it's usually a drop. The amount Mary gives is shocking.
 - 2. Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with a pound of expensive ointment. Judas says that it is 300 denarii, a year's wages.
 - a) Unlikely, we will give something worth a year's worth of salary to someone.
 - b) Most expensive thing in the house; heirloom; insurance.
 - c) She is not giving to receive something back. She is giving, because she has already received the greatest treasure in Jesus.
 - 3. Faithfulness is not giving to earn or receive. Faithfulness is giving because God has already gave.

H. Mary gives scandalously.

1. Mary stoops below a Hebrew servant in wiping Jesus' feet. This is humiliating, but she is showing who Jesus is and who she is.
2. John the Baptist- *"even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."* -John 1:27
3. The lowest and dirtiest part of Jesus is still above Mary's head.
4. Faithfulness is worshiping and honoring the Lord, even when it means humiliation and ridicule.
5. She lets down her hair, which is a scandalous act. Husbands can file for divorce if wives do this. Women can even be stoned for this. Letting down one's hair is meant only for the home, because it signifies intimacy, love, and safety.
6. Faithfulness means being open, vulnerable, safe, personal, and intimate with Jesus, even if it costs us something, maybe our lives.

I. Mary gives of herself

1. Whenever we see Mary (Luke 10, John 11, John 12), we see that she is always found at His feet.
2. She has been listening. She sees the stirring of the leaders. She sees the signs. She knows what is coming for Jesus, so she anoints Him for His burial. None of the disciples know. But she knows.
3. By anointing Jesus, she is saying that she trusts in Him... she knows what He will do.
4. She is saying that she loves Him more than any riches, fame, respect, comfort, or control. She loves Him more than anything.
5. Faithfulness means to give of ourselves to Jesus in love.

J. Faithfulness to God manifests in faithfulness to others.

1. We don't need approval from man, because we have approval in Christ.
2. We don't need to receive a reward for our friendship and service, because Christ is our reward.
3. We don't need to use others for our selfish gain, because we have gained everything in Christ.

IV. Our Faithful Savior (v. 8)

- A. Jesus is affirming that we should care for the poor, but He is also saying that this is a special time when the Savior of the world is with them... but He will die soon. He will die in His faithfulness to us.
- B. All throughout Scripture, we see God's faithfulness (Psalm 145:13, Deuteronomy 7:9, Isaiah 25:1). Creation, covenant, Word, salvation, future.

1. 2 Timothy 2:13- *“if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.”*
 2. Friend’s last sermon- faithfulness of God, despite loss, scandal, brokenness
- C. And this faithfulness is manifested in Jesus.
1. He served, not to be served but to give His life as a ransom for many.
 2. He gave, even when it cost Him everything.
 3. He worshiped, even when it was humiliating for Him.
 4. He loved, even when it meant his crucifixion.
 5. He didn’t love to receive our gifts or service... He loved, because He loved us.
- D. *Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him, How I’ve proved Him o’er and o’er, Jesus, Jesus, Precious Jesus! O for grace to trust Him more.*