

THE LIGHT OF CHRISTMAS

The Fruit of Love

John 3:16, Lk. 1:39-56, Mt.1:18-25, John 14:15; 15:13-14

INTRODUCTION: I am going to plant seeds today.

- I know it is nippy outside – I'm planting inside.
- Seed is the Word of God.
- Soil is our souls – mind, feelings, will.
- The type of seed is Love, as spoken of in the Word of God.

I want to show you, or maybe just remind you, of the fruit produced when love is sown and allowed to grow and bear fruit in someone's life.

The first example I want to offer you is

GOD HIMSELF

No outsider had to sow the seed of love in God's heart.

- The Scripture declares that God is love.
- Nevertheless, even in God, love produces fruit.

John 3:16 NKJV For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

This is the whole reason we have Christmas!

- This is the only reason we have anything good.
- Love for those He created in His image was what moved God to send Jesus into the world.
- Love motivated the Father to allow the Son to become our substitute.
- Love is the reason He accepts the death of Christ as payment for the penalty of our sins.
- The fruit of love, thriving in the heart of God the Father is for us

- Mercy and grace
- Forgiveness and redemption
- Salvation and adoption
- Provision and care
- Instruction and guidance.

Just over a hundred years ago, Frederick Lehman wrote these words:

Could we with ink the ocean fill,
And were the skies of parchment made,
Were every stalk on earth a quill,
And every man a scribe by trade;
To write the love of God above
Would drain the ocean dry;
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,
Though stretched from sky to sky.

Refrain:

Oh, love of God, how rich and pure!
How measureless and strong!
It shall forevermore endure—
The saints' and angels' song.

My friend, let the seed of the love of God grow in your own heart this morning.

We also see the fruit of love in

MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS

- **Mary loved God, and the fruit of that love was**
 - **Reverence.** She honored, revered, exalted God.
 - **Humility.** She counted herself as a lowly servant of God.
 - **Gratitude.** She recognized and acknowledge the Lord as the source of every blessing.

Listen to her words as she spoke to her aunt Elizabeth,

Luke 1:39–49 NKJV 39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, 40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted

Elizabeth. 41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; ...

46 And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, (reverence)

47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. (reverence)

48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; (humility)

For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. (gratitude)

49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name. (gratitude and reverence)

- **Faith.** She believed God and believed His Word.

When the angel appeared, she didn't think, "Wait, I don't believe in angels."

When the angel announced the coming of Messiah, she already believed Messiah was coming.

Her only objection was that she did not see how she could be the mother of Messiah because she was a virgin.

Love leads to trust, to faith.

Loving God leads us to believe His Word. Likewise, believing His Word leads us to love God more!

- **Obedience.** She did what God told her to do, no matter the cost.

When Gabriel told Mary not to worry about the impossibility of a virgin having a baby, Mary's response was

Luke 1:38 NKJV Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." ...

Mary committed to obey the Lord, knowing full well the costs.

- For Mary and her fellow Jews, the culture wasn't like it is today, men and women sleeping together, living together, outside the covenant of marriage, with little or no social stigma attached to their action.
- The Jews were far from perfect, but they maintained a fidelity to the sanctity of marriage, and neither adultery nor fornication had gained social acceptance.
- Problems with parents.
- Problems with friends.

- Problems with the community. Nazareth was a very small town. About 400 residents.

But in spite of the price she knew she would pay with people, she chose to more highly value obedience to the Lord.

It was the fruit of her love for Him.

Has your love for the Lord grown to the point to see the same fruit in your life as we see in the life of this Jewish teenager, probably 16 or 17 years old?

- Reverence – do you take God’s name in vain; tell jokes about the man upstairs?
- Humility – take credit for who you are and all you’ve done, rather than glorifying your maker and your Savior?
- Gratitude – do you regularly acknowledge that every good thing in your life is a gift from God, and express your thanksgiving often?
- Faith – Does your faith keep growing so that you trust the Lord and believe His Word more and more, or is that less and less?
- Obedience – Do you obey what the Lord tells you to do?
 - Which is the rule? Obedience or disobedience?
 - Which is the exception? Obedience or disobedience?
 - Do you love others as yourself?
 - Are you a faithful witness of Christ?
 - Are you engaged in making disciples?
 - Do you tithe what the Lord entrusts to you as income? Do you give proportionately beyond the tithe?

If any of these things are lacking, or you are struggling with these things in your life, then you need to let the seed of love for the Lord grow more and more in your life, for these things are the fruit of love of God.

You need to water the seed by spending more time in reading, studying and meditating on the Word of God.

You need to fertilize the seed by being more faithful and more engaged in worshipping the Lord.

We also see the fruit of love in the life of

JOSEPH, THE ADOPTIVE FATHER OF JESUS

Joseph also was a young man who greatly loved the Lord, and

- **Joseph's love of God also produced fruit.**

- **Purity**

Matthew 1:18 NKJV Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, **before they came together**, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

- **Justice**

Matthew 1:19 NKJV Then Joseph her husband, **being a just man**, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

- **Mercy**

Matthew 1:19 NKJV Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, **and not wanting to make her a public example**, was minded to put her away secretly.

- **Faith**

Joseph also believed in angels, and in the coming of Messiah. He believed the Word. So he believed the message the angel of God spoke to him in his dream. These are qualities that make a young man unique and courageous.

- **Obedience**

Matthew 1:24–25 NKJV 24 Then **Joseph**, being aroused from sleep, **did as the angel of the Lord commanded him** and took to him his wife, 25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

Obedience is always the ultimate test of whether or not we are letting the seed of love grow in our lives to produce its fruit.

A lot of times we can feign and pretend like humility, gratitude, even purity and justice, but obedience shows on the outside. Obedience is what you do.

Even if we have deceived our own heart, our eyes show us what we do. And that is why Jesus made obedience the test of love.

John 14:15 NKJV "If you love Me, keep My commandments."

Finally I must include the greatest example of all of a life that demonstrates the fruit of love:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, MESSIAH, CHRIST, LORD, AND SAVIOR

John 15:13 NKJV Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

- **Every moment of every day in Jesus' life upon the earth revealed the fruit of His love for the Father and His love for us.**
 - **Obedient – He only did what the Father showed Him to do.**
 - **He only said what the Father told Him to say.**
 - **Without sin.**
 - **Faithful – even to death upon the cross.**
 - **Good**
 - **Kind**
 - **Merciful**
 - **Caring**
 - **Compassionate**
 - **Generous**
 - **Selfless and self-sacrificing**

Oh, what a Savior! Isn't He wonderful! Have you trusted Him?

Each of us should ask, are those qualities that are prominent in my life?

They can be, if we have trusted in Christ and He lives in us, and we are allowing the seed of love to bear its fruit in our lives.