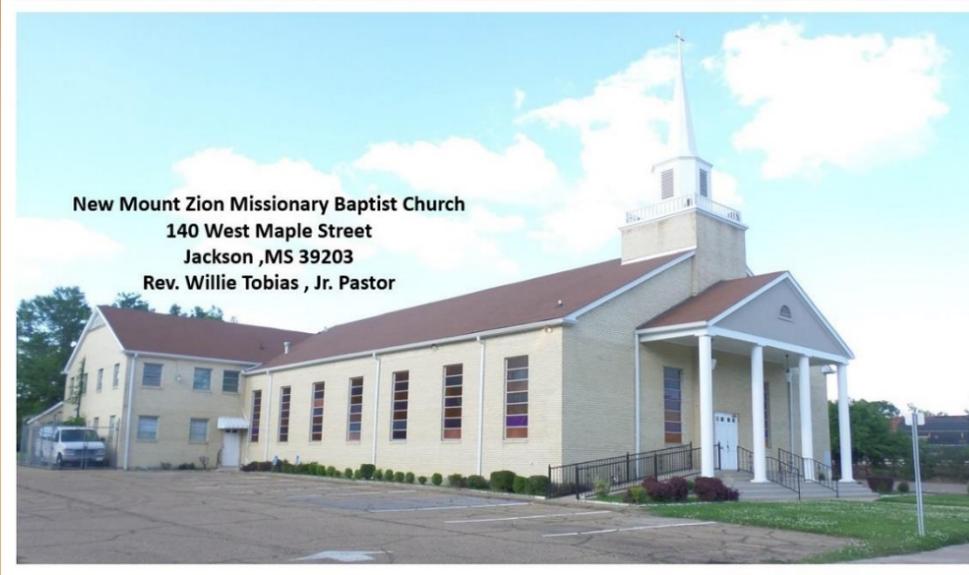


New Mount Zion M.B. Church



New Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church
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**New Mount Zion M.B. Church
Bible Class June 15, 2020**

***“Understanding The Fruit of The Spirit”
1st Fruit***

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” (Gal. 5:22-23)

The Greek word translated “fruit” refers to the natural product of a living thing. Paul used “fruit” to help us understand the product of the Holy Spirit, who lives inside every believer. The fruit of the Spirit is produced by the Spirit, not by the Christian. The Greek word is singular, showing that “fruit” is a unified whole, not independent characteristics. As we grow, all the characteristics of Christ will be manifested in our lives.

We have come, now, to the very heart of the practical manifestation of the Christian life. It is by the fruit of character, that is manifested in his daily life, that the Christian gives evidence of the reality of the life of Christ within.

The fruit of the Spirit is the true characteristic of the Christian life. (Ps. 1:3).

The principal purpose for a tree is that it may bring forth fruit. Jesus had no place for a tree that did not produce fruit. (Mt. 21:18, 19 & Jn. 15:2).

When you think of the word fruit, you probably think of something like an apple or a banana, right? Well when Paul talks about the “fruit of the Spirit” he is not referring to piece of fruit that you might eat with your lunch. What Paul has in mind here is what comes out of a person who has been filled with the Holy Spirit. The word “fruit” refers to the product or result from something. It is what comes from a tree or plant, like an apple comes from an apple tree. In Paul’s case though it is what comes from a person. So when Paul talks about “the fruit of the Spirit” he is referring to fruit that comes from the Spirit of God.

When we follow Jesus and believe in the power of what He did on the cross for us, God fills us with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God (just like God the Father and Jesus the Son), and He lives inside of us. When the Holy Spirit comes into our lives, we produce the fruit of the Spirit. Before Paul talks about the fruit of the Spirit, he talks about the fruit that comes from our sin. Our sin brings things like anger, greed, jealousy, and other not-so-nice things – the worst sorts of fruit! Without the Spirit of God, this is the type of fruit that the sin in our lives produces.

But now when we follow Christ, we are given the Spirit. The fruit that comes from our lives then is much better. Note that “fruit” is the word used here, not “fruits.” Each characteristic is given to every Christian; God does not pick and chose which ones we get. It is not as though we may only produce peace and love but not joy and goodness. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control is given to us as a whole package. All of these are the fruit of a life lived for Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit.

The fruit of the Spirit is essentially nine visible virtues that Paul lists in Galatians 5 that should be evidenced in a person who is walking with Jesus. When we follow Christ, believing in Him and His saving work on the cross by grace through faith, we are united to Christ and we are given the Holy Spirit. Paul's rhetoric in Galatians 5 is that those who have been filled with the Holy Spirit and are living their lives now according to Christ, not according to sin, will look significantly different than those who do not. A life filled with the Spirit of God will produce fruit that is sweet and will draw people to God, not fruit that is sour and will turn people away.

In Galatians 5, Paul starts his argument by stating the characteristics that are produced by the sin in our lives. When we live according to sin and according to the flesh characteristics like greed, envy, strife, malice, and anger come out of us.

Yet, like physical fruit needs time to grow, the fruit of the Spirit will not ripen in our lives overnight. Like a successful gardener must battle against weeds to enjoy the sweet fruit they desire, we must constantly work to rid our lives of the “weeds” of our old sin natures that want to choke out the work of the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives us the power we need to reject those old sinful desires. We can say “no” to sin and accept the “way out” God faithfully provides (1 Corinthians 10:13) by following the Holy Spirit’s leading.

The true Christian virtues are the fruit of the Spirit, not the fruit of human effort. We have the fruit of the Spirit when we have the Spirit. We can achieve fruit bearing only by living in cooperation with the indwelling Fruit bearer. The fruit of the Spirit is the character of Christ, produced by the Spirit of Christ, in the follower of Christ. The more completely one is infused with the Spirit's presence, the more emphatic will be the manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit in his living and working. Only when he is full of the Holy Spirit does he exhibit the full fruition of Christian virtues.

As we give the Spirit more control of our lives, He begins to do in and through us what only He can do - to shape us and grow us to look like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

Since God's goal for all His children is for us to be like Jesus (Romans 8:29), the Holy Spirit constantly works to rid our lives of the "acts of the sinful nature" (Gal 5:19) and display His fruit instead. Therefore, the presence of the "fruit of the Spirit" is evidence that our character is becoming more like Christ's.

Note the following differences between these two: The gifts of the Spirit have to do with spiritual capabilities—what one can do in the service of the Lord. The fruit of the Spirit has to do with spiritual character—what one is in the Lord. The gifts are received as a result of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. The fruit is the result of the New Birth and of abiding in Christ. Gifts are received instantly, while the fruit develops gradually.

Paul uses 9 characteristics to describe the fruit of the Spirit in the book of Galatians.

Love

True, biblical love is a choice, not a feeling. It deliberately expresses itself in loving ways and always seeks the welfare of others. Biblical love is dependent on the giver's character, not emotion. For instance, a mature believer demonstrating love will not exercise his or her freedom if that action might harm another Christian in some way. Rather than risking the possibility of causing the immature Christian to question and stumble, the mature believer will not exercise his freedom out of love for his brother (Romans 14:1-15). Love chooses to set aside one's own preferences, desires, and sometimes even needs to put the other person first (Philippians 2:1-3).

The ancient Greeks had anywhere between four and eight different words for love (depending on the source):

- Storge: affection

- Philia or Phileo: friendship

- Eros: sexual, erotic

- Agape: unconditional, divine, selfless

- Ludus: flirtatious, playful, casual, uncommitted

- Pragma: committed, long-standing

- Philautia: self-love

- Mania: obsessive, possessive, addictive, dependent

***1. Spiritual love is not self-love, but rather self-sacrificing love.
(1 John 3:16-18).***

According to this passage, Jesus is the reason we even know what spiritual love is! In laying down His life for us, He taught us everything we need to know about true love.

***2. Spiritual love is generous, not selfish or greedy.
(1 John 4:9-10 & John 3:16).***

3. Spiritual love is unending, not a temporary feeling, emotion, or attraction.

(Romans 8:38-39).

Nothing can separate us from God's love! 1 John 4:8. God does not just love us or teach us how to love, He is love!

We, on the other hand, love who we want, when we want, how we want, if we want, and to the extent that we want, and then claim we love like God. Far from it.

4. Spiritual love is undeserving and often unreciprocated.

(Matthew 5:43-44, Romans 5:10 & Colossians 1:21-23).

5. Spiritual love is lavish.
(1 John 3:1).

God's love is self-sacrificing, generous, extravagant, lavish, costly, limitless, boundless, measureless and unconditional. Why don't we love like that?