

LCMS International Center Chapel
Galatians 5:16-24

Jesu Juva

“Spirit Wrought Fruit”

In the beginning were two trees. One brought death. One gave life. One whose fruit would bring forth fruits of death. One whose fruit would bring forth fruits of life. One God did not give as food. One God gave us as food. Good food. Food that brings forth every kind of good.

When the first Adam ate of the tree that was not given him as food, not only was all of creation plunged into sin and death, but the seed of sin and death was planted into them and their children, continued to be planted down through the ages, and was planted into us as well. Seed producing, as Paul calls them, the works of the flesh. Not of the flesh that God created good, but the flesh into which the seed of sin and death has been planted. Corrupted works from corrupted flesh.

Paul lists many, but not all, of these out for us. And who among us has not seen and experienced them? We see them in this fallen world. We see them in others. We see them in ourselves. Sins that even if you haven't done, you've desired. That even if you haven't spoken, you've thought. But the deeds have been there, too. Even if in secret and known only to you. And the words. Maybe delicious in the speaking, but bitter once spoken.

These fruits are not of God and His kingdom. In fact, Paul refuses to call them fruit, and rightly so. Fruit is what God created in the beginning for us to eat and delight in. These are corrupted works of corrupted flesh. Works done in rebellion against God. And those who welcome them, live in them, continue in them, Paul says, will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But just as in the beginning there were two trees, so likewise from the beginning God planned for a second Adam (Ephesians 1:5). The first Adam brought death, the second Adam gives life (Romans 5:17). The first passed down the seed of sin and death to us, the second has given us His Spirit, planted in us to produce a very different kind of fruit in your life. Fruit, *rightly* so called, for these are fruits of life, fruit of the Spirit; the good works of God in you: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-*

control.

These are fruits seen in your life, as well. For the Spirit has been given to you, planted in you, and is working these things in you. For you are baptized. In that water the Spirit was poured out upon you, regenerating, renewing, rebirthing you (Titus 3:5-6). That you be a new creation, born from above. The old Adam in you, the legacy of the first Adam in you, the old sinful flesh in you was crucified with Christ Jesus, that a new man come forth, a new man be born, to live in righteousness and purity *forever* (Romans 6:3-4). Forever, Paul says, not just now. Lives as sons and daughters who will inherit the kingdom of God.

I don't know about you, but the way my mind works, it is so easy to remember the bad and forget the good. I remember the sin I regret, even that I've confessed and been absolved of. I remember the hurt inflicted on me by others. I hang onto that which I wish I would forget! And the good, the hopeful, the joys, I *wish* I would remember, I so easily forget. My flesh and the Spirit, as Paul says, against each other, battling each other, keeping me from remembering - and doing - the things I want to do.

But my hope is not in me, to change this in me. I've tried. I can't. Maybe you, too. But the Spirit, poured out upon you and living in you, is working. *O Holy Spirit, enter in, and in our hearts your work begin*, we sang (LSB #913). And continue. And He does. Pointing us to and giving us the second, life-giving, Adam, Jesus, and all His gifts. The Spirit pointing us to the cross of Jesus to see my works of the flesh on His flesh, paid for by Him. The Spirit pointing us to the cross of Jesus to see a tree of death transformed into a tree of life, a new tree, whose fruit we eat and live. The Body and the Blood of Jesus forgiving, feeding, nourishing, and strengthening. The new Adam, the new tree of life, for new you, to produce new and good fruit in your life.

And that sin that I don't want to remember but can't seem to forget, and that good that I forget and can't seem to remember, it is the opposite for Jesus! He *remembers your sin no more* (Jeremiah 31:34), for it is forgiven and gone, and He remembers the good, for it is precious to Him (Matthew 25:37-40). Because you are precious to Him. That's why He took on flesh, to renew your flesh. That's why He sends His Spirit, to give you a new Spirit. That's why you're here. To repent of the old and receive the new. To eat heartily and drink deeply of His fruitful Word, by which His Spirit comes to you and works in you. To produce good fruit in you for others. So that as it was in the beginning, it will be now,

and will be forever. *Very good.*