

Pastor Jon's Sermon on June 29, 2025

Healing Service and The Fruit of the Spirit based on Galatians 5:16-26

“It Takes Time for the Fruit of the Spirit to Grow in Us”

I come to you today after a week at confirmation camp at Imago Dei Village near Clintonville. I went with Patty Koplitz our director of youth and family ministry spent a week at Bible camp with 13 of our confirmation students. It was awesome. I saw many seeds of faith planted in our youth through the joyful and bold work of the camp counselors and staff, through songs and worship, and through Bible work and group initiatives. Many new friendships were formed. And our kids survived the no phone rule at camp. I pray that those seeds of faith continue to be watered and grow the rest of our camper's lives.

Today we have the right of healing embedded in our worship.

Typically, on the months that we have a 5th Sunday, and it works out, we have a healing service. It involves the laying on of hands and anointing for those who want to come forward. We can also come to you.

Where do you need healing in your life? Is it with your body? Your Mind? Your relationships? Or with your spirit? Maybe a little of each? I would say our lessons for today tackle the healing of the Spirit... our faith lives. For example, the Psalm says, “But those who run after other gods shall have their troubles multiplied.” That deals with idolatry. When we put our trust in created things above God in our lives, our troubles get multiplied.

In our Galatians lesson we have the fruit of the Spirit as opposed to the works of the flesh... Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Generosity, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control. The fruit of the Spirit are guidelines for us to grow into as Christians.

In our Gospel, the disciples face rejection by some Samaritans and ask Jesus if they should bring retribution on them. Jesus flat out says no.

And they went to another town. That shows the grace and patience of Jesus.

The prayer of the day gives us a clue of where that spiritual healing can begin: “Keep us faithful to the ways of your Son, that, leaving behind all that hinders us, we may steadfastly follow your paths, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Leaving behind all that hinders us. What is keeping you from following Christ more fully? What things in this world are competing with God in your life? What do you need to leave behind?

In our Galatians 5 lesson, the Apostle Paul, describes how the Holy Spirit produces a different kind of life for Christians, one marked by the fruit of the Holy Spirit. He describes this life as freedom. And as we celebrate America’s independence on the fourth of July with cookouts, parades, fireworks, and gathering with family and friends, let us remember the nature of Christian freedom. As Christians we are always set free from something for something. We are set free from the yoke of slavery to sin and death through Christ on the cross in order to love the neighbor as ourselves. The freedom Paul is talking about here is not a blanket permission to do whatever you want when you want... to self-indulge... but a freedom from living under the demands of the law for your salvation. You see prior to Jesus coming, the way a person was justified or made right with God was through the works of the law. Through how good we are. But now we are made right with God through Jesus’ work on the cross. We call this grace through faith.

And like all freedom, that freedom shouldn’t be taken for granted. The ethical result of the gospel, the good news of Jesus, is one’s faith expressing itself in loving deeds. As Christians, we are called to live out our freedom in Christ by loving our neighbors as ourselves. Paul says this the whole law of God summed up in one commandment.

The old way of life, Paul said involved gratifying the desires of the flesh: sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, sorcery,

enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. And yes we will still struggle with these things, but there is grace for us to heal and grow.

Maybe you struggle with anger. Anger is ok, but if it leads to sin it can hurt others. Or maybe it's addiction that leaves a wake behind you that hurts those who love you most. Or maybe it is jealousy or envy of other people's stuff that makes you feel like you don't have enough. All vices are opposed to the work of the Spirit.

But there is a new way of life in Christ... life in the Spirit of God.

Paul says, "But by contrast, the fruit of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And those who belong to Christ, those who are baptized and believe, have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. The Holy Spirit desires these fruit to grow in our lives. The Spirit will continue to mold and shape us through the Good News of Jesus to be more kind, more gentle, more patient, more loving, more generous, etc. This will happen till we take our last breath.

Let us give thanks for Jesus' work on the cross that sets us free from sin and death and always having to be perfect. He loves us as is. And let us use the freedom we have to love one another as we ourselves have been loved. Amen.