



# One Page Sermon

## By Pastor Robb McCoy

### October 15, 2023

## The Fruit of the Spirit

Recap of sermon from October 15, 2023

Scripture: Galatians 5:13-25

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul has moved away from his theological arguments about circumcision, the Law, Abraham, and his peculiar reading of Hagar. In the last two chapters he gets to the heart of the matter: Following Christ should bear fruit.

Following the way of the world (flesh) is to follow selfishness. It is to worry only about yourself. This kind of thinking bears fruit, but it bears fruit of deceit and destruction. The way of the world disintegrates community. Paul's list of vices are a checklist of things to avoid. They are what he considers the natural end to a life of selfishness. They are symptoms of a greater issue within one's own spirit.

Instead, he wants us to live life as if we have a new Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us a transfusion, or even a transplant, and the new Spirit of Christ bears a different kind of fruit. The fruit of the Spirit are things like love, generosity, peace, and compassion. Again, this list is not meant to be an exhaustive and comprehensive list of things that a Christian should be. They are examples of the fruit that comes naturally from living in Christ's love.

When we follow our own way, the way of the world, or the way of selfishness, we produce poisonous fruit. When we follow the way of Christ, we have experienced a spirit transplant, and now bear a different kind of fruit. Two kinds of fruit, some poisonous, some life-giving. Sometimes in our lives it can be hard to know what kind of fruit we are producing.

When I was a kid, we had a big bush in our backyard that had little red berries on it. In the later months of the summer these little berries would so plump and juicy that they would burst with the slightest squeeze. I was always intrigued by them, but I was warned by other kids not to eat them. I learned as a kid to not eat berries off of trees—even if they looked delicious.

In the front yard of the parsonage is a tree that has little dark red berries that get ripe every spring. I never thought about eating them until one day I was with a friend down at



*LEFT: These are Juneberries. They are tart, and have a tiny little edible seed, and they are all over Rock Island. RIGHT: I don't know what kind of bush it was in our backyard, but it looked a lot like this Winterberry Bush. These berries are not edible to humans, but birds love them.*

the Slough on the Augustana campus. There was a tree with these berries and she picked them and started eating them. I was shocked. She called them Juneberries, offered me one, and I was delighted. Now every spring I pluck a few handfuls and delight in eating them right off the tree.

Fruit can be sweet, delicious and healthy. Fruit can also be poisonous. It can be hard to tell just by looking at a fruit to tell which it is going to be. I didn't trust the fruit of the Juneberry until I had a friend tell me it was good fruit. We all bear fruit in our lives. We all like to think that the fruit we bear is good fruit, but sometimes it takes another person to let us know what kind of fruit we are producing.

This is why Church is so important. This is the purpose of Christian community, to help remind each other of the kind of fruit we are bearing. We test each other—not in a judgmental and shameful way—but in a helpful and mutually accountable way. It is important to check the fruit you bear and listen to those around you describe your fruit.

I am thankful for the fruit that this Church bears. I am thankful for the fruit of service, study, and prayer that happens here. We're not perfect, but when I think about the goodness that happens in this place, I smile. Like when I pluck a handful of Juneberries and pop them in my mouth, I believe God delights in the fruit that we bear with each other.

**Next Week: Let's keep doing good  
Galatians 6:1-10**