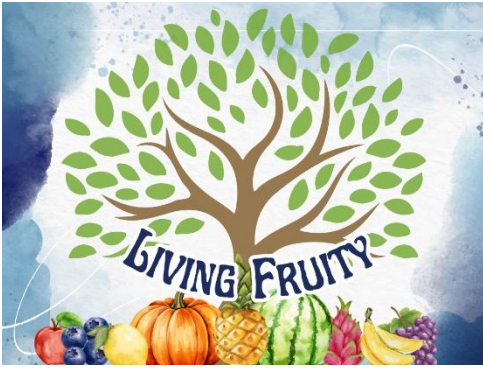




September 13 – Just Fruity!

Today we'll take a general overview look at the fruit of the spirit...how many are there? How do we grow it? Who gets it? If I don't have it – what do I get? Do we really need fruit? And really what's all this fruit business about? Is it something cute for kids or is there really something there for all of us? What's there for all of us is a way of living that can transform us and others!

Scripture:

Galatians 5:13-26 NLT

²² By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

Romans 8:5-13, 15-17 The Message

Those who think they can do it on their own end up obsessed with measuring their own moral muscle but never get around to exercising it in real life. Those who trust God's action in them find that God's Spirit is in them—living and breathing God! Obsession with self in these matters is a dead end; attention to God leads us out into the open, into a spacious, free life. Focusing on the self is the opposite of focusing on God. Anyone completely absorbed in self, ignores God, ends up thinking more about self than God. That person ignores who God is and what he is doing. And God isn't pleased at being ignored. ⁹⁻¹¹ But if God himself has taken up residence in your life, you can hardly be thinking more of yourself than of him. Anyone, of course, who has not welcomed this invisible but clearly present God, the Spirit of Christ, won't know what we're talking about. But for you who welcome him, in whom he dwells—even though you still experience all the limitations of sin—you yourself experience life on God's terms. It stands to reason, doesn't it, that if the alive-and-present God who raised Jesus from the dead moves into your life, he'll do the same thing in you that he did in Jesus, bringing you alive to himself? When God lives and breathes in you (and he does, as surely as he did in Jesus), you are delivered from that dead life. With his Spirit living in you, your body will be as alive as Christ's!

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ This resurrection life you received from God is not a timid, grave-tending life. It's adventurously expectant, greeting God with a childlike "What's next, Papa?" God's Spirit touches our spirits and confirms who we really are. We know who he is, and we know who we are: Father and children. And we know we are going to get what's coming to us - an unbelievable inheritance! We go through exactly what Christ goes through. If we go through the hard times with him, then we're certainly going to go through the good times with him!

Questions:

- Which of the fruit of the Spirit do you see in your own life?
- Do you remember what Pastor Jane said about the fruit? Are they things you gain by working hard? Can you "earn" the fruit of the Spirit?
- If you were going to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit in your own life, what's one step you could take that could help cultivate it?

Reading for the Week:

Monday: Philippians 1:10-11

Tuesday: 2 Peter 1:5-8

Wednesday: John 15:5

Thursday: Colossians 3:12

Friday: Ephesians 5:9