**Sermon 6/9/19**

**Galatians 5:22-26 & 6:1-10**

D. L. Moody was a powerful preacher and often spoke before large audiences.

One night he was speaking to a group about the power of the Holy Spirit.

He held up an empty tumbler and asked his audience,

          “Can any of you tell me how I can get all the air out of this glass?”

One man said, "Suck all the air out with a pump."

But Moody replied, "That would create a vacuum and shatter the glass."

Several others offered suggestions, but Moody was able to point out

          how each attempt would fail, or break the glass.

When he had convinced his audience that removing the air from a glass

          was not an easy task, he smiled, picked up a pitcher of water,

          and quietly filled the glass with water.

"All of the air has now been removed from the glass.

I was able to remove the air because I had a pitcher of water."

He paused for several moments and then continued.

Imagine you are like the empty glass,

          and the air in the glass is all the mistakes and errors you have made in your life.

We cannot get rid of all our sinfulness by ourselves.

No matter how hard we struggle, our anger, and frustration, and impatience,

          will continue to creep in.

We cannot get right with God, or get rid of our sins,

           by trying to suck out a sin here or there.

The only way we can live in the Spirit is to let God fill us with his Spirit.

When we let God pour his Spirit into us, like pouring water into the glass,

            then our sins are pushed out, and we can begin to live God's way.

Paul's letter to the Galatians wavers between abstract reasoning

              and intensely emotional pleading.

He had once enjoyed intimate closeness with the people of Galatia.

As we read through his letter, we sense the anguish he felt,

             and the personal rejection he was experiencing.

The Galatians seem to be turning their backs on the faith

             he had carefully taught them.

He was in great pain as he waited anxiously for them to grow out of their false ideas.

If they continued the way they were living, the faith of everyone in the congregation

          would fail, and the church would collapse.

Because of his great concern for the Galatians,

            Paul wrote some of his most familiar and comforting words.

He reminded them of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

          goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Today is the Day of Pentecost, and a day of remembering and being thankful

         for these gifts of the Spirit, and the fruit which will grow in us,

         as we live by the Spirit.

The Spirit has set us free from worrying about

         whether we are doing enough to please God.

The Spirit gives us his gifts so we are able to serve one another in love,

         and to live a Spirit-filled life, experiencing his joy and peace and love.

By ourselves this is impossible, but with the Spirit's help,

       we are able to accomplish amazing things.

A preacher was busy in his study working on his sermon,

     while his little boy looked at a book of pictures by the fireside.

The pastor realized he needed a large book which was upstairs.

He asked his young son to go up and get it for him.

The boy had been gone a long time,

      and his father got up to see what the problem was.

He heard the sound of sobbing on the stairs.

At the top of the staircase he saw his son crying.

The large book which he had tried to lift and carry, was lying on the step next to him.

When he saw his Daddy at the foot of the staircase, the boy cried out:

           “Oh, Daddy, I tried and tried. But I can't carry it. It is too heavy for me.”

In a moment, the father was up the stairs.

He stooped down, place the book in his son's lap, picked up both the book and his son

          in his strong arms, and carried them down the stairs.

That is how the Spirit takes care of God's children.

When we cannot carry the great load, the Spirit carries both us and the burden.

The fruit of the Spirit is not the work for us to do all on our own.

It is a gift from God we freely receive when we let the spirit into our lives,

             when we set our minds on heavenly things.

A Theological student came to Charles Spurgeon one day.

He was greatly concerned that he could not grasp the meaning

             of certain verses in the Bible.

The noted preacher listened carefully and then replied kindly but firmly:

            "Young man, allow me to give you this word of advice.

             Give the Lord credit for knowing things you do not understand."

We may not understand everything we read in the Bible,

            or why God loves us so much,

           or how God can change us from self-centered beings

           into loving and caring people.

We do not need to understand everything in order to accept his gifts

           and live in the Spirit.

As we are rooted in the Spirit, we discover the fruit of the Spirit growing within us.

When we plant fruit seeds in our garden, we know it will take a full season,

             or perhaps even years for the fruit to mature and ripen

Spiritual growth, like physical growth, takes time.

But whenever we have the opportunity, as we do good to all people,

          it really does make a difference, in their lives and in our own.

Some years back, there was a sergeant in a Highland regiment stationed in Egypt.

The sergeant was a tough man,

           striving to teach and condition the privates in his company.

One particular private was constantly abused as the sergeant

           repeatedly gave him a terrible time.

He constantly gave him extra duties as he kept harassing him.

One night the rain poured from the sky non-stop while the private

           was on sentry duty.

When he was replaced by another as sentry, he came into the barracks wet and weary.

Yet, as usual, he still got down on his knees to pray before going to bed.

The sergeant did not believe in God and thought pray was a waste of time.

His own boots were wet and covered in mud.

He threw the boots one at a time at the keeling private,

Each of boots found their target, striking him on the head and face.

The young private continued kneeling and praying,

               without responding to the sergeant's abuse.

In disgust at the young man's actions, the sergeant went to bed.

The next morning when he awoke,

           he found his boots beautifully cleaned and polished at his bedside.

That morning he realized how wrong he had been.

He was sorry for all the trouble he had given the young private.

He began to ask the private why he believed in God,

             and why he would continue kneeling in prayer each night,

             in spite of the abuse the sergeant had handed out every day.

With many lengthy conversations the sergeant gradually came to believe in God.

When people see our small acts of kindness and love,

              they begin to catch a glimpse of the Spirit.

We experience the fruits of the Spirit as we love and help others.

And it makes all the difference in their lives and in ours.

AMEN