

Fruit (part 1)

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[0:00] Well, as we've studied through this book how people change,! I trust we've become more aware of the heat in our lives, paying closer attention to the situations in which we are tried and tempted,! in which we are prone to produce that thorny, sinful behavior out of a sinful heart that responds in ways that are not pleasing to God, examining that sinful behavior and the motives in our heart that drive it.

And I trust that we've learned something more of the glorious, perspective-altering cross of Christ as we've looked through this book.

That we don't have to respond to the heat in our lives in the same way that we once did. That the old man and the old desires, that that was crucified with Christ.

And we no longer live, but Christ lives in us. And so our potential now to respond to the heat isn't just our own strength and our own sinful hearts, but rather our potential is Christ.

He's dwelling in us in the life we live, in the body we live by faith in the Son of God who loved Him, who loved us and gave Himself for us. And so when we look to Him by faith, we find strength to meet the trials that God has brought into our lives to strengthen our faith.

[1:20] And when we still do demonstrate some of that sinful behavior that's still in our hearts, we don't hide it, we don't continue in it, we don't pretend like it didn't happen, we repent.

We take it right back to the cross where we find forgiveness, mercy, and grace to go and live a new life, to change our hearts and our behavior. But there's something more.

Those are the first three pieces of the picture. Heat, thorns, and cross. But you can't just say, okay, I've identified the problem, I've seen the sinful behavior.

There must be something to take its place. There has to be fruit in the life of the Christian. There has to be good deeds, the things that God has called us to do to take its place.

And so in the last two weeks that we have together, this week and next week, we'll be finishing up the book, Lord willing, and we'll be focusing in on that fruit, that good behavior that should come out of the heat and the trials and the difficulty in our lives.

[2:24] Whereas once we responded with sin to the trouble that comes, now we should be responding with fruit, with obedience to our God and to His commands that He gives us.

And like the sinful behavior that we've seen, good fruit starts in the heart. And it must produce out of a heart that has been changed, a heart that wants what God wants, a heart that worships God and has Christ dwelling in it.

And so, as we begin, we want to see that, again, we want to do more than just diagnose the problem. And there's a quote on your handout here, it would be tempting to stop at analysis and pretend that we finished our work.

But that would be a travesty according to the Bible. Real change does not take place until it is visible in our lives, in our relationships. In other words, faith without works is dead.

You claim to have a changed heart, you claim to be a follower of Christ, to be putting off the old man, then there had better be some evidence, some fruit, some signs that you're putting on the new man.

[3:28] You say, I have faith in Christ. James says, you better show me some deeds that back up your faith. James 2.26 says, the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

If you're looking to Christ, repenting of your sin, then you will be producing fruit. It is not optional in the Christian life. It's not for just the really holy and sanctified people that really want to make progress and really want to honor God in this world.

There's no such thing as a Christian who's just going to sort of coast and say, well, I'm just going to live the way I want and hopefully get by. No, the Christian will. It's not that he can.

It's not that he might. It's not that he should. It's that he will be producing fruit. You claim the great work of God in your life, then you'll walk in the way He calls you to walk.

Ephesians 2.10 For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. That's what He made us new creatures for.

[4 : 29] To do the good works that He's prepared for us to do. The reality for the Christian is that He's been given a new heart. If you're a follower of Christ today, your heart isn't the same it was before you were saved.

It's a new heart. The Holy Spirit comes and gives us a heart of flesh instead of a heart of stone. And you remember then that it's out of the heart that the mouth speaks, that the body acts.

Our behavior reflects what's in our heart. And so if the reality for the Christian is that you have a new heart, then the reality must be that your behavior will reflect that.

Luke 6.45 Jesus Himself said, The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart. And the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart.

For out of the overflow of his heart, the mouth speaks. That's why we've been emphasizing, why this book emphasizes again and again, the heart. When you see bad behavior in your life, it's not enough just to clean up the surface and change the behavior.

[5 : 33] You've got to get at the heart. Well, God has done that work of transforming the heart for the Christian. And we want to talk this morning about the heart from which good behavior flows and then next week, more specifically, that fruit itself.

The heart is what's at the center or core of our being. It's the mind and the will and the affections all rolled into one. If we're to love God with all of our hearts, then He's to be at the center of our life. He's to be integral to everything we do. Not out at the edges, not on the periphery where we can ignore Him if we want, where we can pretend like He's not there sometimes and when we need Him, be thankful that He is there.

No, He's to be at the heart, at the center, so that everything that we do is affected by the fact that God has changed our heart, that we have a heart relationship with Him.

And so, when we go to work, it's not we're a worker and then in the evenings with our family, we're a Christian, it's on the job, our heart has been changed.

[6 : 40] And I'm a follower of Christ here at work or in my school or in my home every day or wherever it is you spend most of your time. It's not just something for Sundays and for the evenings perhaps when you're with your family.

The Bible, our authors write, the Bible describes the Christian life in terms of a new relationship with God that brims with hope and flows from the core of our being into our daily lives. And so it's only in a close and loving relationship with God that we'll be enabled to produce the fruit that God calls us to produce.

If our relationship with God is that good on a heart level with God, then we'll want to obey His commands. We'll delight to because we love Him. Some people think that love and rules and laws are sort of mutually exclusive.

But they are not. Some people will say, if God loves us, then why does He cramp our style? Why does He put all these limits on us? Why does He give us this book all full of rules? I don't like rules. I don't like laws. If God loved us, He would let us be free. Well, that's a heart that hasn't been changed. Those kind of questions don't see the connection between the goodness of God and the rules that He's given for us.

[7 : 55] Our relationship with God shouldn't be one of an enemy towards God, but of a child and friend. And if that's the case, then we'll see the good of His rules. God gives us laws and commands to obey.

He calls us to produce fruit because it's for our good and for His glory. A fish that lives in the water might think that it's pretty cruel that he's restricted to the water.

It's not fair. It's not fair that the only place God lets him live is the water. He wants to be free. He wants to throw off that restriction. It's not very loving of God to limit him. And so he flops up on the shore because he wants to be free.

And what happens to the fish when he flops up on the shore? He dies. Yeah. He can't breathe up on the shore. God designed him to live in the water and God designed you to live according to His laws.

He designed you to be producing good fruit. So if you love Him, and you'll love His laws, and you'll see the good in it, instead of only seeing the limits and what you perceive as God cramping your style, we need a heart change to see the good fruit God expects of us as something that's desirable and good.

[9:09] This quote is on your handout under the heart. A new lifestyle, the outward fruit of a believer's life does not grow out of a stoic obedience to God's commands, but from a heart that's been captured and captivated by the giver of those commands.

Do you have that kind of relationship with God where you love to read His Word, you love to talk to Him, you love to listen to Him, and you love the laws that He gives you. You love Him so much that His laws are not a burden, but a delight.

Oh, how love I Thy law. Do you love God and are you able to say that, to sing that? I love Your law, Lord. I want to produce fruit. I want to bring You glory in that way.

The closer your relationship with God, the more that will be your heart. It's the difference between a trusting child with loving parents. The child believes that his parents has his best interest at heart, and so he delights to do what they require.

He delights in his parents' smile upon him. When he disappoints his parents and breaks their rules, then that weighs on him. He's discouraged by that, and he wants to win their favor back again.

[10:19] He loves his parents. He loves their rules. And you contrast that, and so he delights to do what they say. Then on the other hand, you've got a cruel schoolmaster.

And this isn't the schoolmaster that's strict, but everybody loves him. This is just the cruel one that nobody loves. And they're not lovable at all, and they're just mean. And they just lay down the law with no love, with no gentleness, and people dread to be in their class.

And there's no relationship with that teacher. There's no love for them, and so there's no love for their rules. There's no love for them, and so there's no desire to keep their rules. In fact, you almost want to break them just to spite the teacher.

I'm not saying that's right for anybody that's in school. I'm saying that's the nature of the relationship sometimes. The relationship with God shouldn't be one with the strict, cruel, mean schoolmaster, because that's not who He is.

God is the loving parent. The one who delights in us and delights to see us keeping His law. And so we should delight to love Him and to do what He calls us to do.

[11:29] That will flow out of a heart that has been changed by God. You see the emphasis on the heart in the Old Testament. God sends Samuel to anoint David to take Saul's place as king over Israel.

And Samuel walks into Jesse's house, and Jesse parades all his sons before him, and there's the first one. He's tall, and he's good-looking, and you can imagine that guy being king.

You think, that's got to be the one. What does God say? 1 Samuel 16.7, And the Lord said to Samuel, Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I've rejected him.

The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. Right. And we see later that David came to understand the importance of that.

He prays in Psalm 139, 23, and 24, Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts.

[12:33] See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. When David examines his life, he doesn't just stop with the outward behavior. He says, Lord, look at my heart and show me any evil way that's in my heart so that I won't produce the wicked behavior that flows out of an evil heart.

Know my heart, Lord. Show me where it's not right and help me to come to you for power and grace to see change in my heart that I might see fruit in my life. And so when you examine your life to see where you stand with God, do you only look at the outward behavior?

Or do you pray with David for a heart that's laid bare before God? The prophets spoke of the need for a new heart. Jeremiah talks about the new covenant and the law being written on our hearts.

Not just on tablets of stone, coal, but it's written right onto our heart of flesh. Something that we should love to do and obey out of our heart. Ezekiel 36, 26 and 27, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.

I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

[13:43] See the connection between the heart and the law. The heart that loves God will love to keep His law. And God puts His Spirit to move us to follow Him. Because left to ourselves, we're not going to follow Him.

We're not going to delight to obey His law. So He gives us the new heart and the Spirit to move us to do that which is right. Only out of a heart that's been changed by the power of God will we want to and actually obey His laws.

And God tells us through Solomon in Proverbs 4, 23, Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.

Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. Once you memorize something one way, it's hard to switch. Watch over your heart. Guard it. Out of your heart flow the springs of life.

He doesn't just say, watch your behavior. There's plenty of that in Proverbs, but the root of the thing is watching over the heart. A heart that fears the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

[14:50] That emphasis on the heart carries right over into the New Testament. Jesus, when asked about the greatest commandment, points to wholehearted love for God.

A heart that loves to worship God in the way He says. A heart that loves to honor His name. Keeping commandments 1-3 will then delight to keep commandments 4-10. And so forth that fruit. So Jesus picks up an emphasis that's already been seen in the Old Testament. But He also sets forth something of an impossible standard. Who here has loved God with all of their heart? Nobody. Not even close. But Jesus did love God with all of His heart. He did what we could never do. And then He sends His Spirit to change our hearts.

And Jesus, who loved God with all of His heart, comes to dwell in our hearts by His Spirit. And gives us power to love God from the heart.

[15:49] Still not perfectly. Our hearts still run after other things sometimes. But what a blessing to know and come back to that cross-centered perspective that God doesn't just say you need to love me and then leave us to ourselves to do that because we could never do it.

No, He gives us His very Son who did love with all of His heart to dwell in us. So Paul prays for us in Ephesians 1. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints and His incomparably great power for us who believe.

We come to believe in Christ and He gives us the power to love God. And Paul says, I pray that the eyes of your heart might be opened up to understand the power, the great blessing that you have through Christ dwelling in you.

And Christ does open the eyes of our heart to see that blessing. Quotes on your handout, My biggest problem and hindrance, my wayward sinful heart has been addressed.

God has redeemed me and given me a new one. You say, I can't produce fruit with this old heart of mine. That's right, you can't. So God has replaced that old heart with a new one. That heart is dead, crucified with Christ, and you no longer live, but Christ lives in you.

[17:10] And so out of that kind of heart, you can produce good fruit. This should just cause us to rejoice. God calls us to an impossible standard, but then He gives us every resource we need to live up to that standard.

He doesn't leave us to ourselves. He has given us everything we need for life and godliness. And you see how foolish it is for us to take any sort of credit, to take any sort of pride in our accomplishments, look at what I've done, look at what I've accomplished for God and for His kingdom.

That's foolishness. Because left to ourselves, we could accomplish nothing. It's only by the grace of God. And so anything good that God does through us, we must give Him the glory for.

We're called to a life of humility and giving praise to God, not one of pride, because apart from His work in us, we have nothing. So if you're a child of God today, you have what you need in order to produce God honoring fruit, even in difficult or even in impossible circumstances.

And so having received that new heart, I hope that we're hard at work seeking to build and maintain that heart relationship with the God who gave us the heart. We have to be in union and communion

with Him if we're to walk fruitfully through the barren wasteland all around us.

[18:36] And so given that the heart is so important for producing fruit, what are some ways that you can watch over or guard your heart as Proverbs 4.23 exhorts us to do?

How can you watch over your heart? Because from it flow the springs of life. I've left some blanks there on your handout so you can listen to suggestions here and write some of them in.

And you all help one another. Help me out this morning. How can you guard your heart? The heart that God's given you, your heart, how can you guard that and keep it close to Him?

Deep. Immersed in His Word. And how will that guard the heart? Okay, good. Immersed in the Word to guard your heart. Jim. Alright, so we pray. That helps us to guard our heart.

Good. What else? Dare. Quickness to confess our sins. And to make it right when we've sinned against someone else. Indeed, pray that God will show you your sins so you can immediately deal with it before it takes root in your heart.

[19:37] It begins to grow. Good. What else? Roger. Fear the Lord and shun evil. Excellent ways to guard the heart. How can you shun evil?

Chuck. Be aware of Satan and his devices. Remember how he tempted others in the Scriptures.

Adam and Eve. Tempted to doubt the goodness of God.

Be aware of that. Know how Satan can come and sow seeds of temptation in your mind. You know that if you allow your heart to go unchecked, you'll find that your behavior starts to follow and so be careful what you let yourself daydream and fantasize about.

When Satan attacks your heart and mind with a tempting thought, don't indulge it. Not for a moment. Don't roll it over in your mind so that your affection starts to run out after it.

Kill it. Pray for grace. Say, Lord, take that away. Take that temptation. Take that thought. Banish it from my mind. Don't indulge it for a moment. Be aware of his devices. Good. What else? Jason.

[20:42] One of the chapters in the book is called Change is a Community Process or something like that. You need your brothers and sisters in Christ and so get in a relationship of accountability with someone so that they're checking up on you and you're checking up on them.

And that will guard your heart. They'll see if you're starting to slip into some sort of pattern that's going to be destructive or sinful. Good. Accountability. Evie. Oh, excellent.

And so when a situation arises, you've got a scripture that matches it. Call to mind. Remember what God has said about that. Guard the heart. How can a young man keep his way pure?

And I haven't stored it in my heart apparently. Finish it for me, somebody. And I might not sin against you. Or I've treasured your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Good. Walking circumspectly circumspectly before our God.

Good. Anyone else? How you can guard your heart. Okay? Meditation. Not just reading the word. Not just memorizing, but thinking on it. And how it applies to you and how it affects your life.

[21:45] Rex. Stay away from sinful areas, from the things that will produce temptation. I have down here, be careful what you allow through the eye and ear gate that can so easily turn your heart astray after other lovers.

Be careful what movies, what TV you watch, what music you listen to, what people you listen to. Be careful what you read. What you allow in that will affect your heart and draw it out after other things.

Jason. Good. Jesus talks about the heart that's had a demon cast out of it, but nothing good has replaced it. And seven more, worse than itself, come back and dwell in it.

So not an empty heart, but one that's actively producing fruit. Good. Being thankful. Keep us from a heart of bitterness and anger and discontent. Good.

Good. Good. Good. I think simply making use of the means of grace that God has given us, public and private means. And some of these have been mentioned already like reading God's Word, praying, but worshiping together with God's people, fellowshiping with His people, singing together, I believe is an excellent way to guard your heart, rejoicing in the truths of God's Word through song, reading a good book about God and His love for you, cultivating that heart relationship with Him.

[23:10] All of these things, excellent ways that you can guard your heart because it's out of the heart that the mouth speaks. It's out of the heart that you act.

And so guard the heart. Guard its closeness to God. And when you feel it beginning to stray, pray for grace. Lord, I'm going to bring my heart back in line with Your Word.

Make my desires pure and right. Forgive me for my evil, wicked desires. Forgive me for loving something more than You. And watch over that heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.

Well, let's turn for a moment to Philippians. Paul's letter to the Philippians. I don't think we'll have time to get through all of this, but we'll start it and then you can finish it if you so desire on your own. Again, next week we'll focus in more on the actual fruit itself. But to finish today, and this is how this chapter wraps up in the book, they use Philippians as a case study to look at this big picture that we've seen.

[24 : 28] All of these elements. Heat, thorns, cross, cross, and now fruit. Now, Paul had planted the church at Philippi. It was near to his heart. But now Paul's in prison.

He's facing heat. And let's see what happens. Let's see the heat in Paul and the Philippians' life and see how they responded to it and how the cross provided a helpful perspective for both Paul and for the Philippians.

And we're not doing this just with respect to the heart that we focused on today, but again, the whole big picture. And as we do it, don't just leave it with Paul and the Philippians.

This morning, as we just very quickly look through this letter together, you pick one particular situation of heat that you face on a regular basis.

As you've thought about it in this class, you thought, well, this is one of the areas where I face the greatest struggle. This is some of the greatest heat that produces some of the greatest wicked response in me.

[25 : 30] And whatever that may be, you think on a particular thing and see how Philippians applies to you and see if you've responded like Paul has. Or see if you responded more like the Philippians did to the heat.

And see if some of the corrective perspectives that we find in Philippians would be helpful and useful to you in your particular struggle. So don't leave it out here with Paul and the Philippians. Bring it home and make it personal with some particular area of heat, stress, difficulty that you face on a regular basis.

So, first of all, what's the situation? Well, Paul's situation is that he's in prison. You see it in verses 13 and 14 of chapter 1. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace garden to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the Word of God more courageously and fearlessly. He's in chains. That's Paul's situation. He's in prison. He's suffering. Look down at verse 30.

Since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had and now hear that I still have. He's struggling. In chapter 2 and verse 17, I'm being poured out, even if I'm being poured out like a drink offering.

[26 : 43] That speaks of suffering and he's sharing in Christ's suffering we see in chapter 3 and verse 10. All that's going on in the churches that he's planted is not well.

That must weigh on him. Now your situation will be different. Maybe your heat is from raising your children, from troubled family relationships, trouble with money or the lack of money, work problems, lack of work problems, being sinned against maybe.

You've got a person that seems like they just keep sinning against you and you've approached them and you're starting to be sinful in your response to them. You're being criticized. You're facing heat somewhere.

Nobody here obviously is in prison because you're here. Your situation is different from Paul but you face heat too. So, what is it for you? And then if you were in prison like Paul and suffering, what might some of your responses or my response tend to be?

Think for a moment that you're in prison. Unjustly in prison. In chains. How would you respond? Or how might we tend to respond? Why God? Apparently, you've made a mistake, God.

[27 : 53] We question Him. What else? Hmm. Poor me. Self-pity. Complaining. Worrying. Doubting.

Anger perhaps. But, that's not the kind of response we get from Paul. We'll talk more about his response in a second. But, let's see some of the Philippians thorny response. We don't really see a thorny response from Paul.

Paul's in prison and he's writing letters to the churches. And in Acts, we see him singing while he's in prison. And later, we see he's rejoicing while he's in prison. That's coming from a heart that's been changed by God.

The Philippians, they're facing their own heat of trials. There's competing factions in the church. And their thorny responses include selfish ambition and vain conceit. We see that in the beginning of chapter 2, there's complaining and arguing.

You know some of the things these churches are struggling with by what Paul exhorts them not to do. Chapter 2 and verse 14, do everything without complaining and arguing. Which makes us think that they were probably complaining and arguing.

[28 : 57] Fighting. Remember, Euodia and Syntyche, I plead with you to be reconciled. In chapter 4 and verse 2, they were fighting. They were worrying. Be anxious about nothing. And so you think about the specific thorny behavior you tend to produce.

What are your thoughts and words and attitudes and emotions and actions in that situation?

Questioning God, I think, is a particularly dangerous one that Dare mentioned.

Why God? And so there's, put a quote on your handout there under letter B. When difficulty enters our lives, we often question God's wisdom, goodness, power, and compassion.

This is not a little sin. It assassinates God's character and impugns His motives. Do you wallow in self-pity when you face difficulties? Do you put God on trial when He doesn't run the universe the way you would?

There's a dangerous, thorny response that we often produce in the heat. And then what cravings, another question to ask, what cravings and beliefs rule the heart to produce these ungodly reactions?

[30 : 05] What thorns are there in the heart? Well, there's this selfish ambition. Chapter 2 and verse 21 is striking. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

That sort of heart's going to lead to some pretty ugly behavior. Because when I'm looking out for number one, I'm going to do everything I can to protect number one, me. And that means if I'm going to have to hurt somebody else, I'm going to hurt them.

If I'm going to argue with them, then I'm going to argue with them and I'm going to win that argument. When selfish ambition rules, then in our hearts, then thorny behavior springs from that.

Do you ever allow that to grow in your heart and then hurt others to get what you want?

Self-righteousness and pride. There were people that were proud of who they were as circumcised Jews and they put confidence in the flesh. That's a proud heart. And so much of our sinful behavior comes from a proud heart, doesn't it?

We think very highly of ourselves and we think other people should think highly of ourselves and so we tend to look down our nose at other people and when they don't think very highly of us and they treat us like they don't think highly of us, that produces a whole other round of sinful responses from us.

[31 : 22] And so pride is this huge problem. You see it in the first part of Philippians chapter 3. the self-righteousness and pride. When you see thorns coming out, look to see what's in your heart.

Is it your self-confidence that turns you away from trust in God? Is it your fear of the unknown? Are you afraid of commitments that God calls you to because you've been hurt or burned in the past? Are you driven by comfort, fear, or people-pleasing in your reaction to the heat that comes in your life? Some heat comes at work and you just really want to make the boss happy and everybody else happy and so you fudge a little bit, you do something you know not right because you want people to like you.

Well, you're driven by this desire to please people instead of honoring God. You look to see what beliefs are ruling in your heart to produce the ungodly behavior. And then you can see the consequences that follow.

There's envy and rivalry. In chapter 1 and verse 15, there's destruction and shame. In chapter 3 and verse 19 that comes from that unbridled, selfish ambition. There's factions in the church.

[32 : 29] There's division. There's fighting. All of this comes out of this sinful heart and sinful behavior. What consequences are you facing when you respond poorly to the heat that you're thinking about in your life right now?

Have you actually made the situation worse than it was to begin with by your sinful response to it? Probably. Probably. Has it left you cynical? Have you reaped broken relationships because of the

way you've responded to difficulty in those relationships?

Now, you can read through Philippians and see some of those things, but then there's this glorious truth. What changes lives inside and out? What rules the heart and produces godly responses? And this is the perspective of the cross. And Philippians is full of gems that we can lay hold of that should correct our perspective, that should draw our hearts back to God. We're just going to race through these.

Let's start in chapter 1. There's a mighty, a sovereign God. Verse 6. Being confident of this, that He who began a good work and you will carry it on to completion. The heat that you're facing in your life is not going to pull you away from God.

[33:41] He's too powerful. He's too sovereign. He's not going to let you slip away. That can be an encouragement to produce good fruit in the midst of that difficult situation. There's the Spirit of Christ.

Look at verse 19. I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance. Do you have that kind of confidence?

I've got the Spirit of Christ and so I know that God is going to use it for good. Do you think about that fact when you're facing your particular struggle with the heat? Or chapter 2 and verse 1.

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, any comfort from His love, fellowship with the Spirit, those are things that you do have as a child of God.

You're not walking through this situation in your life that's producing such agony. You're not walking through it alone. You understand who you are in Christ. I'm going back to chapter 1 and verse 21.

[34:42] For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. Even should I not survive this heat in my life. To die is gain. I'll go and be with Christ.

You keep that perspective ever before you in the midst of your suffering. Union with Christ. Union with Him in His suffering. Sharing. Paul talks about sharing in chapter 3 and verse 10.

I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings. Becoming like Him in His death. And our authors write, if He suffered, why do I think I wouldn't?

Suffering should not be avoided. It is redemptive and proof of my union with Christ. And so often we suffer and we think, why God? Why me? Instead of thinking, I'm suffering for the cause of Christ just like Christ suffered.

I'm sharing in His sufferings. I should expect that. And even though it's painful, be thankful that God counts me worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. That's a helpful perspective when the heat comes.

[35:51] Remember that it's for the cause of Christ. That's the kind of heart that fruit will flow from in the midst of suffering. The very Christ who humbled Himself to the point of death on a cross.

That Christ is dwelling in me and will give me the grace to be humble in the midst of circumstances where I'm tempted to show my pride. Chapter 2 and verse 13.

For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good will. You say, I can't continue to work out my salvation with fear and trembling.

My circumstances are too hard. You can't imagine what I'm going through. Maybe I can't, but I bet Paul could. And I know that Jesus can. Because He was tempted in every way just as we are, yet was without sin.

Jesus never had a thorny response when He faced trouble. And so if He calls you to work out your salvation, fear and trembling, then you can do it, for it's God who is at work in you.

[36:52] You have that resource. You have Christ holding on to you. I love that. Chapter 3 and verse 12. Not that I have already obtained all this.

I've already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Now there's something there for us to do. To press on. To persevere. To persevere to the end.

That's some of the good fruit that we'll produce. But we can only do it because Christ has laid hold of us. Do you remember that truth? The example of others can be a powerful influence for good.

Paul refers to his own example. And so in the midst of your struggle, are you clinging to these cross-centered realities? Do you remember your suffering Savior as you suffer?

Do you remember His Spirit in you? Whose example are you following? And then that should produce greater love for God in our heart and greater holiness and a desire to obey Him.

[37 : 55] And so fruit comes and in Philippians 4 and verse 8 talks about what should be in our heart. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.

Here's a way to guard your heart. Think and meditate on those kinds of things. And a heart that's been soaking in that will be slow to sin and quick to produce fruit.

Some of the fruit we see here, I'm not going to read the verses, I'm just going to list them off. The fruit we see is that the Philippians even, selfish though they were, were praying for others.

Paul talks about their prayers being a help to Him. Righteousness is being produced. There's rejoicing. Paul is rejoicing in his suffering and he calls them to do the same. There's humility being produced and that's what we're called to.

There's true worship by the Spirit and glorying in Christ. Paul is remarkable. He's got every reason to put confidence in the flesh, but he says, whatever it was to my prophet, I now consider lost for the sake of Christ.

[39 : 09] He puts off this self-righteousness and this pride and he's humbled before God. What fruit is produced in his life as he focuses on Christ? He presses on. He has contentment, we see in chapter 4.

Do you see any of those things in your life? Do you see that fruit in the midst of the heat, in the midst of the struggles that you face? Is there contentment? Is there rejoicing? Is there humility? Is there this putting off of self-righteousness?

Is your tongue more gentle and controlled than it was before you knew the Lamb? It was silent before his accusers. Are you more humble? And then good effects come from it.

Good effects come from good fruit being produced. The guards that Paul was with were receiving the witness of Christ and then others were emboldened to speak the truth in boldness. The gospel was spreading as a result of the good fruit in the life of Paul.

There was renewed concern for Paul and his needs were met. So there was fruit. There were good consequences from this in the lives of the Philippians. And then this promise for us as well.

[40 : 15] My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Good will come as we see the cross and as we produce fruit in the midst of our difficult situation, in the midst of our heat.

And so, may we focus on Christ and His cross, drink deeply of Him, and so produce fruit. Read through Philippians on your own and see some of these elements there.

And then Lord willing, next time we'll come and talk more specifically about the fruit that we should be producing. But let's go, let's guard our hearts that we might honor God in all that we do. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.