

Weeds or Wounds?

Introduction Supernatural Love Spent the last few weeks Prioritizing our time with God
Developing deep roots to the Holy Spirit Last week- we began pulling weeds in our lives With those lessons under our belt... We can begin looking at each of the fruits of the Spirit of God If you are new, let me tell you about Spiritual Fruit

Jesus promised those who trust in Him... That they would receive the Holy Spirit... And the Holy Spirit would manifest in their lives.....certain changes That Paul called Spiritual Fruit The Evidence of a life transformed by Jesus Is that His followers would produce in their lives.... Supernatural changes....

Galatians 5:22-24 (ESV) 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

We have said that we want more of these things in our lives Jesus taught us that He grows fruit in us if we abide in Him... But abide is not just spending time with Him It is surrendering your plans for His Desiring what He wants more than what you want. Getting His perspective.....and then surrendering to it.

A critical point that I want to make sure we all remember... You can't grow Spiritual fruit on your own.... You can will yourself to be more loving...joyful...peaceful You can make some effort but it will always fall short... That is why you have not been able to do it yet. These are Spiritual Fruit They are grown only by the Holy Spirit of God

Our lives, if surrendered, become the garden.....the soil.... That God can use to manifest himself through us. The only way we can produce true...

Love...joy...peace...patience...kindness..etc Is to walk in step with Holy Spirit To live in the Spirit...moment to moment.

Let me ask a question....Do you believe in your heart that you are a loving person? Do you love people with God's love?

Today we will look at Love.... The first and greatest spiritual fruit.

We see all kinds of love around us... We may love our job...our hobbies...even our sports teams. Some of us love our pets... We love people... We seem to know how to love ourselves... Hopefully we have known those who love us.....and those we love Sometimes the greatest love we have felt is the love for our spouse....or our child. We love our friends....hopefully our friends love us...

None of those kinds of love....represent the Spiritual fruit of love. The Spiritual fruit's are uniquely expressed by those who trust Jesus Those who have the Holy Spirit Many who deny Jesus still love their spouse and children. You and I loved our friends and family... Before we surrendered to Jesus and we truly thought we knew what Love was.

The Spiritual Fruit of love is a love that is so deep...so consuming...so selfless That when it is expressed..... Everyone stop and notices God... They recognize that it is a supernatural love... A love that we don't naturally possess A love like many have never experienced.. It is the greatest of the spiritual fruits...

So there are **9 Spiritual Fruit** These are supernatural....they come from God Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self Control

Each of them...when expressed...go far beyond What humans can naturally experience You may be looking at a few.... And thinking...it would be a miracle of God... if I became more....gentle....or had more self-control... And those who know you....agree with you. And that is exactly the point... These are supernatural fruits....that means that they don't come naturally

What we can do naturally.... doesn't come close to what God can do... You think you know love....until you experience God's love You think you know peace...until God's peace flows through you When we express God's juicy fruit.....it is obvious to everyone.... They see something in you....and they seem to know it is bigger than you. It draws them in...they see such a transformation in your life... that they have to inquire about what happened. They don't know it...but.... They are seeing Christ in You... You are just the means....the instrument... that God uses...to reveal Himself.... To those around you..

Peter and John....2 disciples of Jesus.... Not overwhelmingly educated.... Not great orators.... Yet after Jesus died and was resurrected.... They received the Holy Spirit.... Began living by the Spirit.... And preached boldly and eloquently for Jesus...

Those around them knew....that Peter and John.... Had changed...they were doing things.... They didn't have the power in and of themselves to do.

Acts 4:13 (ESV) 13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

That is what we want.... We are uneducated...common....normal folks....here at Remnant But hopefully we have spent so much time with Jesus.... In the Sanctuary...the quiet place...developing deep roots That when people see us.... The one thing they know for sure.... Is that we have been with Jesus.... There is so much of Him flowing out of our lives... That they really can't see us anymore..

Why is this so important? Because people...are drawn to Jesus... Jesus once talked about His crucifixion and resurrection....

John 12:32 (ESV) 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself."

We are His followers... As the Holy Spirit becomes more prominent in our lives....as we Live By the Spirit Christ is lifted up....through us....to others... They get a glimpse of something so supernatural.... So beyond what they have seen any human do... That deep down....they realize.... They just got a glimpse of God... And they are drawn to discover more.

Interesting that God chose to use us.... He could have directly revealed Himself to people.... So He chose His followers... Think about that for a moment... He didn't pick us because we have it together... He picked us because He knew we were messed up...

We are so unable to reflect the things of God on our own.... That if we do something supernatural.... Everyone knows it must be God....and not us... We think we have it all together.... God is counting on us to be messed up. If you are messed up....that's Great God can really use you...

Have you thought about the fruit...that drew you to Christ?

Which fruit did God use to get you? Did you finally see....authentic....love? was it peace? maybe joy? perhaps kindness? You saw someone....who expressed a fruit....and you knew it was not of them... It was so genuine...so real...so authentic...so juicy... You were drawn to it...

What you saw in them was Jesus... The juiciness of our fruit....is the only thing we have....
To reach a lost world with the message of Jesus.

Only true followers bear fruit..... Jesus said that there would be a way.... To determine who was one of His followers.... And who were just His fans.

Matthew 7:20 (ESV) 20 Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

There are a lot of people who are fans of Jesus... They cheer Him on... If they have to claim a faith...they pick Him They are generally positive toward the idea of Jesus As long as it doesn't interfere with what they want. They do church when it is convenient. They show up when they can... When there is nothing more pressing... As the Doobie Brothers sang..... "Jesus is just alright with me."

Jesus may be alright with me... But all is not right with Jesus Fans never bear fruit.

But Jesus didn't want fans...He wanted followers. Followers spend time with Him.... They go to the Sanctuary Accept His perspective ...surrender to His plans They develop deep roots... They pull weeds.... They prioritize Him above all else. They worship Him regularly They prioritize being with other believers They are right with Jesus.... And Jesus said you know them by their fruit.

Every week people seeking fruit come here... I get their emails...I hear the stories.... We listen when they are baptized... They finally got to the end of themselves... They are hurting...hopeless....and desperate... They come to a church....because nothing else has worked... Everything else has let them down.

Trying to find some glimmer of God....something that is real.... It takes every ounce of courage...just to walk in our door. They know they don't deserve to be here... What they don't know is neither do the rest of us... They have spent their whole life running They are worn out...ashamed....covered in the mess of their sins... They are the Prodigal who finally got to the end of themselves. and headed home.

They arrive...panicked and fearful.... They have experienced so much pain...so much rejection... They are afraid we are going to reject them too.... They don't know what they will do...If God's people are no different.

They are looking for something...something that has been missing their whole life. They are seeking love....real love....God's love... Unconditional love....because they know that is the only love they qualify for.

And they come here... And look for it....in US. Do you think they care...how well you are dressed? Do you think they are moved...by how proper you are in the services? How comfortable you seem with your other Christian friends? How self-righteous you appear at church?

The only thing that they care about.... Is the fruit that you and I bear.

John 15:5 (ESV) 5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

They aren't really looking at you.... They are looking for God in you. You are either bearing His fruit.... Or you are doing nothing. and they can tell the difference.

Jesus gives us a glimpse of how He feels when those who should be bearing fruit are not.

Matthew 21:18-19 (ESV) 18 In the morning, as he was returning to the city, he became hungry. 19 And seeing a fig tree by the wayside, he went to it and found nothing on it but only leaves. And he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the fig tree withered at once.

Jesus seems to always call out wasted potential in His followers. Not because He wants to curse us....there is no condemnation for those in Christ....but rather because others need to see our fruit and we need to abide in Him so that we can experience all that He designed us to be.

As yourself this question...Are you a loving person?

We consider ourselves loving people... We love lots of people We deeply care about others.... We serve....sacrifice....and express our love to others... Just ask my wife....my kids...my family...my friends...my small group.... I really do love them...

But you know what.... It doesn't take the power of the Holy Spirit for us to love those who are lovable.

We can naturally even in our sinful state....show some love to those who love us in return. We see families...couples...and lots of people love those who love them Nothing real miraculous there...

But the Spiritual Fruit of Love.... the kind of love that shouts of God... The love that is not of this world.... Is when you love others.... You know...the OTHER...others...

Those who don't love you at all? Those that hate you? Have tried to hurt you? Spoken poorly of you? You know...the real....others. The ones you really don't want here..... The ones you have not been able to love?

Supernatural love....shows up...when you can't. That moment when your heart breaks... When God opens your eyes.... To see people the way He sees them.... And you feel for them.....deeply...so deeply that.... There is one thing...that you are absolutely sure of...

You know that love is of not from you.... Because you would never love them on your own. Nothing in you could love them..... It must be God....

Is God flowing through you to love others?

The friend that betrayed you? Your ex spouse? The young boy who is now the father of your unexpected grandchild? The homeless person that you would prefer not be here? The spouse who violated your marriage vow The "other" man or woman who seduced them

The obnoxious alcoholic.... Who killed your child driving drunk The drug dealer who tempts someone you love... The men who are involved in sex trafficking? The child predator who moved into the neighborhood.... Or tried to reach your child....

The adult who molested you.... The man who raped you...

Do you have the capacity to love them? No...no way....not a chance. You might say... To show that kind of love...to those kind of people... Would take a miracle of God.

I don't have it in me...if it was going to happen.... God would have to do it through me. EXACTLY!

Now we are beginning to understand... The Spiritual Fruit of Love. It is not natural to us No human could possibly love them... It must be God... Jesus said it this way...

Luke 6:32-33 (ESV) 32 "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.

Let's explore this kind of love a bit deeper. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 13...

"The Love Chapter"

In the preceding chapter...Paul addressed some of the Corinthians Who were craving to perform miracles And in this chapter Paul reminds them of what the priority really is. Rather than chasing specific spiritual gifts.... Paul tells them...they should be pursuing... the greatest gift of Love.

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 (ESV) 13 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Compared to love....Supernatural gifts...don't impress God Growing faith...doesn't either Nor does generous giving.... Love is what moves God's heart. Paul then tells us what that love should look like

1 Corinthians 13:4-6 (ESV) 4 Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant 5 or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; 6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

Do you see the flowers? Love is patient...love is kind. Love rejoices with the truth

Do you see the weeds? Love does not envy or boast... It is not arrogant...or rude Does not insist on its own way Not irritable...or resentful... Does not rejoice at wrongdoing

These weeds are the barriers to love... We have to allow the Holy Spirit to pull these weeds from our heart These weeds are the reasons we don't love the way Christ loved.

Love is patient....we need impatience pulled from our garden.. Love does not envy....we need jealousy pulled from our garden... Love does not insist on its own way....we need selfishness pulled from our garden...

But the chilling truth we spoke of last week. You don't have the power to pull weeds. There is no "Spiritual Roundup" that you can spray to kill those weeds Only Jesus can pull those weeds..... Jesus was a great weed puller...

John 4 Jesus help pull the weeds for a Samaritan woman In an encounter that he had with her. He removed the weeds of loneliness and empty love and showed her God's love

Mark 1 Jesus helped pull the weeds for a leper and helped him overcome those weeds of isolation and shame and restored his hope and faith And showed him God's love

Luke 19 Jesus pulled some weeds for Zacchaeus He removed the weeds of greed and selfishness in order to show them God's love

John 8 Jesus pulled weeds for a woman caught in adultery Removing weeds of lust and shame.. Replacing them with flowers of forgiveness and hope and God's Love

Jesus helped people pull weeds... He freed people all the time from the weeds that entangled them Jesus looked beyond the weeds to see the person.... Rather than just their problem....

Do you focus on the problem...or the person? When we actually get to know people....take the time to connect with them We often discover...that the weeds that have entangled them.... Came from a wound... And God plans to heal that wound...with His love

In the process....He is going to transform us.... So we can stop focusing on their weeds....and help them with their wounds. Supernatural Love penetrates the weeds, sees the person, and heals their wounds....

Last week I spoke about pulling weeds...how we had to remove everything...the weed, the stem, and most importantly the root. Where do you think "getting to the root of the problem" came from?

Those who don't love others with God's love...only see the weed and only deal with the surface.....But with God's love pouring through us....we know that below every weed....is a wound.

Man's love stays on the surface....God's love goes deeper and heals wounds.

How do you feel about **Hugh Hefner**?

Karen Covell was a Christian TV producer who worked in Hollywood She was the producer of Legends and Headliners with Matt Lauer. Her first assignment was to plan and produce and interview with Hugh Hefner

She was seriously conflicted She was frustrated and wanted to balk at it. But she went to the Sanctuary and asked God for His perspective. God prompted her to find the deeper story....to love him...as only He could.

She led her team to discover who Hugh Hefner really was.... and not focus on the obvious...

Like every other interview he had done. The interview proceeded with simple yet unexpected questions... What were your parents like? What characterized your childhood? What childhood experiences shaped you?

The Crew was shocked....as Hugh began pouring out details.... He had been raised in a puritan home of strict and deep religious tradition. His parents believed in God but not a God of grace...not a God of Compassion Not a God of love....they had a rigid religion.

They never expressed....ever...any love for Him They never told Hugh or his brother that they loved him His mother...a germaphobe....never kissed him or showed him affection

Hugh said he set out to find love wherever he could. Hugh began to weep as he shared the story of the blanket his parents gave him His security blanket...he painted a very vivid picture of going to bed at night Hugging that blanket....the one bordered with bunnies. It became his comfort blanket...

He also revealed growing up...that he always wanted a puppy... His mother said the dog spread too many germs Then Hugh developed a tumor in his ear and his parents gave in... they bought him a dog... But after just 5 days the dog died.

The crew was spellbound as Hugh described.... Wrapping the dead dog in his bunny blanket To try an comfort it His mother buried the dog...and burned the blanket.

At this point in the interview...Hugh said.... I guess I am just that little boy...trying to find love. Karen Covell said in that moment she realized God had used her To expose the gaping hole in this man's life

Big weeds....have big roots....Big roots come from Big wounds.

This man had confused sex for love. He had turned a desperate need into an empire of pornography. Despite all of his wealth, fame, women and notoriety.... Hugh Hefner closed the interview by telling them.... He is still searching for the love that he never had.

How do you feel about Hugh Hefner?

Sometimes we understand the Weeds....when we understand the wounds.

Often we judge others by the weeds in their life.... But God's love....the Supernatural fruit of the Spirit....searches for the wounds....that kept them growing.

Hugh Hefner is not the only person...looking for love in all the wrong places.

Day in and day out...we are surrounded by people.... Who need to experience the love of Jesus with no strings attached. They need to experience the juicy fruit of Love....God's love... They come here looking for it...looking for it...in us.

We don't judge their weeds.... Because we know they can't pull them.. We don't have the power to pull weeds and grow fruit and please don't miss this.....AND NEITHER DO THEY!

We have to love them enough to point them to Jesus We trust Jesus to take care of their weeds and grow fruit in them. Just like He did for us...

Our job is to just keep sowing seeds of love. Serving others....meeting their needs....taking the time to know who the really are. Caring about them with no strings attached....

Treating them the same...whether they slept in a mansion on Long Boat Key Or whether they slept on Long Boat Key

Whether their last drink was a glass of wine from their patio overlooking the bay Or a bottle of wine from a brown bag overlooking a dumpster.

Paul tells us what true love looks like when it is mature.

1 Corinthians 13:7-8 (ESV) 7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never ends.

Do you see what is repeated in this verse? Remember repeating something in Scripture is the same as putting it in all Caps, Highlighting it, and underlining it.

ALL THINGS

Do you see the repeat of the words "all things"? Bears...believes....hopes...endures... All things All people

No matter what person God has placed in your path... Love...bears all....believes all....hopes all..and endures all No exceptions....

Name something that hurt you....God's Love bears and endures that. Name something else...God's Love bears and endures that....Keep going...God's Love bears, believes, hopes and endures it all.

1 Peter 4:8 (ESV) 8 Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

That is what love does... Love covers a multitude of sins... As the love of Jesus pours through us.... He begins to use us to root out weeds... Those weeds of sin and shame that have kept us entangled in our past... unable to have any hope for the future...because all we can see is our weeds.

Then someone comes along...who trusts...who instills hope.... Who through the eyes of Jesus...sees the potential in every human.

Paul says that Love endures all things.... God's love persists when all other types of love have given up. God's love keeps you in your marriage....when everything shouts to leave God's love....keeps you from giving up on your child...when everyone else has God's love....pushes you past the smell...and the guarded resistance.....to see the person Living in the emptiness of homelessness

And desperate for God's love God's love....pushes you past the iron gate...the mansion....the riches...to see the person... Living in the emptiness of materialism And desperate for God's Love

God's love...and only God's love...pushes you past your hurt...to love those who have hurt you Through us God wants to love....those we have deemed unlovable.... God's love bears all things... Believes all things Hopes all things... and Endures all things

1 John 4:19–21 (ESV) 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.

God gave us a new commandment... John 13:34–35 (ESV) 34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

We call ourselves the church of Jesus Christ.... It is ridiculous for us...to claim to be the church...the body of Jesus... and not love the undeserving the way Christ did.

He never gave up on anyone.... When others gave up...He got busy He hated the sin....but oh how He loved the sinner. As Christians...how dare....how dare we bear the name of Christ.... If we can't love like Jesus loved... If we have already decided who is worthy to sit in these seats....or kneel at this altar.

There is a reason why Love is the first fruit listed... Love is listed first....because it is to be the distinctive character.... That defines those who follow Jesus. It is what sets us apart from all others.

If you have the juicy fruit of love in your life... You love those others think are unlovable. Persevere when others don't You push past their resistance with love...not judgment.

When you see weeds in the lives of others....you don't destroy the weed....You pray that God will show you the wounds....and where He wants you to apply His love.

You begin to see God's plan to transform them.... Because God loves them too much To leave them where they are...

You begin to see with His eyes...with His perspective. You begin to understand the potential of every human being.... And through the process.... Without even realizing it... He transformed you too...

You see God wants to bring out your potential too..... Because He loves you to much to leave you where you are.

Let's close with the last verse of this Chapter

1 Corinthians 13:13 (ESV) 13 So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

Why is love better than faith and hope? Because faith and hope will one day pass away. When Christ returns or when you go to heaven.... faith is not important because you don't need it anymore. Faith is being sure of what you have not seen. You will have seen Jesus face to face....you don't need faith.... Because you will have certainty.

When you get to Heaven.... What are you going to hope for? You have it all..... Everything you will have ever hoped for...will have come true.

But we sing it all the time.... His love endures forever. Love will be all over the place in Heaven

So who has God placed in your life to see their wounds....and all you have seen is their weeds? Who is God bringing to your mind right now...and inviting you into the dirt with them...to pour His love on their wounds?

Who have you been unwilling to love? Who is too messy for you to love? Too risky for you to love?

Honestly...who would you prefer to not show up at our services? Who have you decided is not worthy to be here?

Are there any weeds that entangle you.... That keep you from loving every person you see? Do you see them as a problem or a person? Ask God to show your their wound.... and to give you the courage to cover it with His love.

And Jesus wants love to be all over the earth as well.... His followers...with a supernatural love.....busting out of us.... The juiciest fruit....satisfying those who hunger for it. Using His love as the saute that heals the wounds.

Let me take you back to where we started....Do you believe in your heart that you are a loving person? Do you love people with God's Love?

God has placed people in our lives...with wounds that need to be healed. He has positioned and equipped you to debride those wounds with His Love. .. I want to challenge you....to ask God who HE wants you to love. Ask Him for an opportunity to love someone....that no one loves...that everyone has given up on.... And then let Him know...Here I am Lord...send me...I will go for you.

You have never looked eyes...with anyone....Jesus does not want you to love. Pray that Jesus will remove any weed....that keeps you....from being willing to love everyone.

A new commandment I give you...Jesus says.... That you love one another.... Just as I have loved you...

Just as I have loved you....Just as...in the same manner...in exactly the same way...with the same depth...the same determination..the same grace...the same mercy....the same compassion...the same forgiveness....the same heart.....YOU...Jesus says....LOVE THEM....JUST AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.

Let's Pray