LOVE PRODUCES LOVE

1. Your fruit shows your love
2. Your fruit shows whom you love

Have you ever received a chain letter or one of those chain emails? The purpose of the chain is that one person can pass along one thing to many people. I send it to a group; each member of the group sends it to another group and the information reaches many starting with one.

The Scriptures show that God intended to use that same idea to spread his love. I saw an example of love passing quickly from one person to another, through tears, at a wedding a number of years ago. The bride came down the aisle with tears of love in her eyes. Those tears passed her love on to the groom. Their tears passed the love onto the bestman and maid of honor. Their tears passed the love onto the whole wedding party and to many others in attendance.

This morning Scriptures show us how God has passed his love to us and how he wants us to pass his love to others. Love produces love. First, we need to make sure you have love. The first part of our text tells us that your fruit shows your love. Then we need to know who will benefit from your love. The second part of our text tells us that your fruit shows whom you love.

Yes, love produces. Everyone has love in his heart, but not everyone's love produces more love. Love for yourself produces sinful pride; love for money or things produces greed. Your fruit shows your love. Your fruit is the attitude in your heart - your fruit is everything that you do. What kind of fruit do you have? The fruit of God-pleasing love is love and it is love that produces. Love produces love. Your fruit shows your love. Believers bear the fruit of love, which they received from their Father.

Jesus says: As the Father has loved me, so also I have loved you. The Father's love produced love. You might say that the Father's love was the first link of the chain. It started here: the Father loved Jesus. The Father created the world and gave it to his Son. He gave him the name that is above every name, so that upon hearing his name all in heaven and on earth and under the earth would bow down and praise him. The Father exalted his Son to the heavens and placed all things under his feet. He gave him all authority and power and dominion. He made him the Judge of the nations. Everything the Father does is for the praise and glory of his Son's name.

Such love produced more love. In return for the Father's love, Jesus loved his Father, and his fruit - his attitudes and actions - showed his love. Jesus explains how his fruit showed his love: Just as I have held on to my Father's commands and remain in his love. Jesus loved his Father by obeying his commands. He did not look at his Father's commands as burdens. He looked at them as ways to say thank you for the love he'd received from his Father. Carrying out those commands would not be easy. It would mean giving his life. But the love he would show to his Father would produce more love.

In keeping his Father's commands and bearing the fruit of love, Jesus' love produced love. In keeping his Father's commands and bearing the fruit of love, Jesus loved you. Jesus showed you the greatest love known to man - he laid down his life for you. No one has greater love than this: that someone lays down his life for his friends. Jesus gave up the life the Father had given him in heaven. He gave up the name that is above every name. He gave up his power, authority and dominion. He gave up his
position as Judge at the right hand of God. Jesus gave up everything, right down to his very life, because he loves you. Love produces love. Jesus' fruit proves that he loves you.

Jesus' love for you produces love from you. As the Father's loved me, so also I have loved you. Remain in my love. Jesus does not want you to revert back to the love that produces bad fruit such as sinful pride or greed. Such fruit leads to damnation and hell. Jesus encourages you to remain in his love. How? If you hold on to my commands, you will remain in my love. And what is his command? This is my command: love one another as I have loved you. How did Jesus love us? No one has greater love than this: that someone lays down his life for his friends.

Do you see the chain? Love produces love. The Father loved the Son. The Son loved you. You are the next link. Remain in Jesus' love by fulfilling his command to love others. Your fruit shows your love. Your attitudes and your actions will show your love for God. When you are willing to lay down your life for others, you will show your love for God. That does not necessarily mean you have to die. What it means is that everything you do, everything you say, everything you think, everything will show love to others. Put others first, as the Father put the Son first and as the Son put you first, and your love (your fruit) will produce more love.

Jesus says: I have told you these things so that my joy would continue to be in you and that your joy would be complete. Just as Jesus did not think that following the Father's commands was a burden, he does not want you to thing that loving each other is a burden. Just the opposite - he calls it a joy. Jesus finds his joy and happiness in loving you. He wants you to have that same joy. He wants your joy to be complete. Following his command to love each other, bearing the fruit of love, love producing love, that produces joy.

I know that you have such love. I know that the love of God has produced love in you. Who will benefit from your love? Your fruit shows whom you love.

Jesus' fruit showed whom he loved. When Jesus died on the cross to earn forgiveness of sins for the world, he showed that he loved the world. However, in a very personal way, Jesus showed that he loved you - you, as an individual; he calls you his friend.

Realize that you did not ask to be Jesus' friend. You did not even want to be Jesus' friend. Jesus himself says: You did not choose me, but I chose you. When you were born, your sinful mind was hostile to God. You were his enemy and never wanted anything different. Realize also that you do not deserve to be God's friend or loved by him. God has always loved you and always will, but never because you deserve it. In fact, you often make it very difficult for God to love you. You spend so much time loving yourself and the things of this world - not obeying his commands to love him and your neighbor - that it seems you're doing your best to make God not love you. Even then he loves you.

I know that he loves you because he calls you friend. First of all, Jesus loves you so much that he would have died on the cross if you were the only sinner in the world. He was willing to do whatever it would take to make you his friend. But he also showed his love to you by making known to you his Father's will. But I have called you friends, because everything that I heard from my Father, I have made known to you. Jesus made his Father's will known when he gave his life to remove the sin that separated you and his Father. He made his Father's will known when he spread out his arms on the cross so that he might spread them around you for eternity.
The Father's will is that all men be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth. You have a part in carrying out that will. When Jesus chose you to be his friend, he also appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will endure. And that fruit is love. Your fruit shows whom you love. You can show your love for God by carrying out his will. His command is this: Love each other as he has loved you. God does not ask you to carry out this command blindly. He has given you a behind the scenes look at the purpose of his will. He wants your love to others to show his love for them. Love produces love.

Jesus invites you to love others and in so doing to make more friends for him. What others? Not yourself and probably not those who choose you. Love those who do not love you. Love those who do not deserve your love. Love as God loved you. How do you love others? Make known to others everything you have learned from God. Make known to others the love you have received from God. Love produces love.

You have learned two main things from God. You have learned from his Law that you are a sinner in need of a Savior. You have learned that you do not love God above all things and that you do not love your neighbor as yourself. But you have also learned that, in spite of the fact that you have misplaced your love, your God still loves you. You have learned that God did not just declare his love for you but that he showed it by sending his Son and by giving his life on the cross in your place. You love others when you point out their sins and their need for a Savior. And you love others when you tell them that Jesus has forgiven their sins. You love others when everything you do, when all of your attitudes and actions, point them to the love of their God. Love produces love.

Such love is fruit that will last. When you show this love to each other, you are showing love that will last into eternity. When you bear the fruit of love that shows you love God and others before yourself, you will remain in Jesus' love into eternity. May the love of God continue to produce in you such love that lasts! Amen.

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