

Firstfruits

[Jas 1:16-18 ESV] 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. 17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 18 Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

I. Introduction

- A. We are blessed by God!
- B. We have God's favor, and directive.
- C. The responsibility of man is to reflect glory and praise to God, and the evidence is all around us, but especially seen in relationship.
- D. We are a Firstfruits of His creatures:
 - 1. Creatures: created beings
 - 2. Firstfruits:
 - a) Webster: the earliest gathered fruits offered to the Deity in acknowledgment of the gift of fruitfulness
 - b) This needs a bit of unpacking
- E. YOU and I are a kind of firstfruits!
 - 1. Let that be a greeting among us...
 - 2. Tell someone they are a firstfruit

II. Text

- A. Of His own will:
 - 1. God's will brought you into being.
 - 2. boulomai: will: to will deliberately, have a purpose, be minded
- B. He brought us forth by the word of truth
 - 1. He is the source
 - 2. He brought us forth
 - 3. And He did it by His word of truth
 - a) His word: spoke the world into existence, In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God.
 - b) His Truth: Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life
 - 4. We are here by the will of God, through the work of Christ!
- C. That we should be: God's intention for us
- D. A kind of firstfruits:
 - 1. A kind...an type, an example of, a manifestation of
 - 2. Firstfruits:
 - a) [Rom 8:23 ESV] 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.
 - b) [Rom 16:5 ESV] 5 Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia.
 - c) [1Co 15:20 ESV] 20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.
 - d) [2Th 2:13 ESV] 13 But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.
 - e) [Exo 23:16, 19 ESV] 16 You shall keep the Feast of Harvest, of the firstfruits of your labor, of what you sow in the field. You shall keep the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labor. ...
19 "The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God. "You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

- f) [Lev 2:14 ESV] 14 "If you offer a grain offering of firstfruits to the LORD, you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits fresh ears, roasted with fire, crushed new grain.
 - g) [Num 18:12 ESV] 12 All the best of the oil and all the best of the wine and of the grain, the firstfruits of what they give to the LORD, I give to you.
- E. Summary restating:
- 1. He willed deliberately,
 - 2. to bring us forth,
 - 3. by the WORD OF TRUTH (Jesus)
 - 4. That we should be
 - 5. A kind of first fruits, having importance and purpose
 - 6. Of HIS creatures

III. Point

- A. You are not an Accident
- 1. Better stated: You are an ON PURPOSE
 - a) God brought you into existence
 - b) He did so BY HIS WILLFUL choice
 - c) And HE has a PURPOSE for you.
 - 2. God doesn't make mistakes and He has a purpose behind all that He does
 - 3. This passage was set up by the statement of God only giving good gifts, then He makes it personal
 - 4. You are:
 - a) Loved
 - b) Created
 - c) Set apart for good work
 - d) A blessing
 - e) Gifted to serve
 - f) Can make a difference!
 - 5. God didn't create you for no purpose, you are necessary to the mission.
- B. You are Necessary
- 1. The gifts God has given you are necessary for the mission to be properly equipped.
 - 2. There is no replacement for you, submit yourself to God for ministry service.
 - 3. That means you adapt to God's agenda for your life, surrendering to His call:
 - a) Surrender is a word that is sometimes misunderstood in the church
 - b) Surrender isn't a sign of weakness, but a recognition of strength!
 - c) I surrendered to ministry, because it was not my plan and I had to follow God's plan, therefore I willfully surrendered my plan
 - d) This showed that I didn't have anything to offer, but God didn't need what I had, He gave me what I needed to accomplish His will.
 - 4. The ministry of the church needs the gifts God has placed in you to be:
 - a) Developed through discipleship
 - b) Exercised through ministry
 - c) Experienced in fellowship
 - d) Encouraged in service and worship
 - 5. WE NEED YOU!
 - a) Not because you are "All that"
 - b) But because GOD GIFTED YOU!
 - 6. You have great value
- C. You are Valued
- 1. You have great value, and you are valued!
 - 2. The work of the gospel in our community, from our church is a beautiful example of value
 - 3. Ministry is valuable, and we are ministers of value.
 - 4. Shopping:

- a) value for the price/cost
- b) Finding something worth a lot, and getting a good deal on it.
- c) The point is that it is worth a lot!
- d) Something that is cheap compared to other things, may not have value if its not worth having
- e) But something that is valuable, is valuable, no matter the cost!

IV. Close