

Living a Fruitful Life

The Need for a fruitful life

Intro: It is interesting that one of the first things God said to His creation was “Be fruitful.” This command was His first blessing upon the animals He had created; and it was also His first blessing upon the first humans that He created. Everything that God created was made to grow and be fruitful. It’s what keeps the world going.

In the same way God’s people today are His new creation.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph. 2:10)

For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. (Gal. 6:15)

And His creation blessing to us as His new creation is also, “Be fruitful.” Just as being fruitful keeps the world going, it also keeps the church going. God’s new creation depends upon each “new creature” of God bearing fruit. This year I plan to talk with you about how we can do that, how we can live a fruitful life.

We cannot underestimate the importance of spiritual growth and fruit bearing in this congregation. The church grows as its people grow and bear fruit for the Lord. So let me begin by talking with you about why each of needs to live a fruitful life.

To demonstrate true repentance

At whatever level you may want to think about it, whether individually or nationally, God has commanded that sinners repent.

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Mt. 3:2)

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, (Acts 17:30)

And in Scripture true repentance does not exist without fruit bearing. Listen to these verses:

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance; and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you, that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. (Mt. 3:7-9)

Maybe those Jews were disposed to think that their salvation was sure because they were physically children of Abraham. John taught them that the true children of Abraham were those who repented of their sins. And what was the evidence of this repentance? Fruit!

And so a fruitful life demonstrates that real change has taken place in our hearts.

To escape the judgment of God

The theme of God's judgment upon the unfruitful rings throughout the gospels. Jesus taught this lesson in a profound object lesson.

*And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it, and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He *said to it, "No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you." And at once the fig tree withered. (Mt. 21:19)*

John not only taught these disciples that they should bring forth the fruit of repentance. He also spoke of what would happen to those who did not bear fruit.

And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. (Mt. 3:10)

And so we must bear fruit to escape the judgment of God.

To avoid losing the privileges of divine sonship

The Scriptures teach that when one fails to make use of the blessings and resources God has given him, they are being wasted upon him. God will not allow this to happen.

Jesus spoke about this also in His parables:

And He began telling this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree which had been planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it, and did not find any. And he said to the vineyard-keeper, 'Behold, for three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree without finding any. Cut it down! Why does it even use up the ground?' (Lk. 13:6-7)

This was the mistake of the Jews. They did not make proper use of the covenantal privileges they had as God's people.

Jesus a couple of days before his death told them a parable about a landowner who planted a vineyard and then sent both servants and his son to collect the fruit that had been grown. Instead of welcoming them, they mistreated and even murdered them. Jesus applied His parable to the Jewish people with these words:

Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and be given to a nation producing the fruit of it. (Mt. 21:43)

We should not miss this powerful truth about fruitfulness. Those who do not make use of the privileges of divine sonship will lose them.

To fulfill the purpose of salvation

Still too many Christians think of baptism like buying a ticket on a heavenly train. Get on board and ride to glory! No! Baptism is a pledge instead that we are dedicating our lives to the Lord to live for Him and bear fruit for him.

Therefore, my brethren, you also were made to die to the Law through the body of Christ, that you might be joined to another, to Him who was raised from the dead, that we might bear fruit for God. (Rom. 7:4)

Christ gave his life in order to release sinners from the obligation of earning their own righteousness by law-keeping and in order that they could be married to him. But what is the purpose of this union? That we might bear fruit for God!

We sometimes breathe a great sigh of relief when someone (a young person, for example) has “obeyed the gospel” and what we see in the aftermath is really nothing different at all. In fact what may follow may be less attentiveness to their soul and maybe not even enough interest in the “gospel” they just “obeyed” to attend church services or even get a Bible class lesson. Peter would say a person like that is not better off but worse off (2 Pet. 2:20)

The problem is, such a person is not bearing fruit for God; but this is what we are saved to do!

To prove that we are true disciples

Jesus’ expectation was that those who listened to him as disciples would also do what He said. They would bear fruit.

By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. (Jn. 15:8)

This text teaches two points; but let’s notice the latter first. Living a fruitful life is evidence that we are truly disciples of the Lord.

Sometimes the original concept of discipleship is lost upon us. To be a disciple was not only to be a student of another; but also to seek to imitate or model the life of one’s master/teacher.

We prove ourselves to be disciples of Jesus when we bear fruit like Jesus did!

That is why those in the NT who taught false doctrine and lived sinful lives were described in this way:

These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted; (Jude 12)

Get the picture of a dead tree laying on the edge of the woods—dead, fruitless, food for termites!

But notice again the second point from John 15:8.

To bring glory to God

By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples. (Jn. 15:8)

Imagine a farmer lays his hand on your shoulder and says, “Come here. I want to show you my garden.” And you go out there and all you can see is a patch of grass and weeds. And he begins to claw into the grass and points down to the ground and says, “Look there. Here’s that corn I planted. And all you can see is a dried up stalk.” How would you respond? Would you say, “Man, you’re some kind of farmer!”

Listen, we have to live our lives in a way that is a credit to God! What we want people to say is, "Wow! Your God is some kind of creator! I can see the fruit of His work in your life!"

Conclusion: These are, I hope you see, good reasons to think about and devote ourselves to spiritual growth and fruitfulness. In the lessons to come we'll talk about how to be fruitful and what we ought to produce.

But let me ask you, "How do you see yourself? Are you a vibrant disciple that is growing and producing fruit? What do people see when they look at your life?" Are you a credit to the Creator?

Are you a part of the new creation?