

Studies in Christianity Christian Living #2

S#1.

Principles of Fruitful Living

S#2.

Text : **Matthew 7:15-23** ; **Colossians 1: 3-12**

S#3.

A. Our last lesson was an overview of the allegorical story of the vine from John 15.

1. The allegory consists of a cast of three individuals.
 - a. Jesus is the vine.
 - b. The Christian is the branch.
 - c. God the Father is the vinedresser.
2. Likewise there were three primary lessons.
 - a. All branches (*Christians*) are expected to bear fruit.
 - b. Branches can only produce fruit while attached to the vine. (*to Jesus*)
 - c. The vinedresser (*God*) tends every branch;
 - 1) the fruitful He prunes
 - 2) the barren He burns.

B. The concept of bearing fruit is one of the primary emphases of the N.T.

S#4.

1. Many passages instruct Christians to bear fruit to God's glory.
2. There are also many passages that refer to unfruitful branches being burned in fire.
 - a. **Matt. 7: 19** – Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
 - b. **Luke 3: 9** – Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

C. Because it is so often emphasized as important, this lesson will observe :

S#5.

1. The bearing of fruit is a mark of having been born again ... saved.
2. The bearing of fruit is a lifestyle, not an accomplishment.
3. The bearing of fruit involved more than completing acts.
4. The bearing of fruit will be a standard of judgment.

I. Bearing fruit is a mark of salvation.

S#6.

A. Clearly, when there is no fruit there is no salvation.

1. **John 15: 2** – Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away;

S#7.

2. **John 15: 5** – I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. **6** If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned

B. Only good trees can produce good fruit.

1. God identifies people by their fruit and so should we.
 - a. **Matt. 7: 16** – You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? **S#8.**
 - b. What does a thief look like ? Old ... Young, Rich ... Poor
(*Christians steal from their employers.*)
 - c. You only know the thief when he is caught ... his fruit shows him to be thieves.
2. From Genesis 1 God's natural law has been that everything produces after its kind.
 - a. **Matt. 7: 17** – So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.
 - b. Notice the text say “every” tree ... it is consistent with the law of nature.
3. A good tree **cannot** produce bad fruit to the glory of God.
 - a. **Matt. 7: 18** – A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. **19** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
 - b. A peach tree cannot produce pears and an apple tree cannot produce oranges.
4. The fruit is a product of one's heart. One's heart is good or bad, not a little of each.
 - a. **Matt. 12: 33** – Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. **34** You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. **35** The good man brings out of *his* good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of *his* evil treasure what is evil.
 - b. When one's heart is surrendered to God, his action will truly be to God's glory.

C. Fruit is not determined by men's standards.

1. **Matt. 3: 7** – But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for **S#10.** baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? **8** Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; **9** and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. **10** The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

2. Notice the standard by which the fruit was evaluated was not :
 - a. If they were religious ... **Pharisees and Sadducees** = religious leaders
 - b. What was their heritage (family) ... **“We have Abraham for our father.”**
 - c. Their fruit was the **ONLY** standard.

II. Bearing fruit is a lifestyle, not an accomplishment.

S#11.

- A. Perhaps it is a stretch, but it is as if God was telling us something about our lives when He described the tree of life in Heaven.

S#12.

1. **Rev. 22: 2** – On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve *kinds* of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.
2. The bearing of life-giving fruit is an ongoing things.

- B. Jeremiah make the same point that Jesus made in John 15.

1. Without God, man will bring no fruit to fruition,
Jer. 17: 5 – Thus says the Lord, Cursed is the man who trusts in mankind and makes flesh his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord.
6 For he will be like a bush in the desert and will not see when prosperity comes, but will live in stony wastes in the wilderness, a land of salt without inhabitant.
2. With God man can produce fruit to God’s glory.
Jer. 1: 7 – Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord. **#14.**
8 For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought nor cease to yield fruit.
3. *The one whose faith is deeply rooted in God does not depend on external circumstances to bear fruit.*

- C. Jesus taught that the one who trusts in Him and His words are not moved by external circumstances.

1. **Matt. 7: 24** – Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.
25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. **26** Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. **27** The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell — and great was its fall.

2. The bearing of fruit is a logical response to the teaching of God's word.
3. We learn God's word so we can please Him with our lives. **S#16.**
Eph. 5: 10 – walk as children of Light ...**10** trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

D. The word is only of value when we are able to apply it in our lives.

1. **James 1: 21** – Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. **22** But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.
2. Brother James gives us three steps that lead to the salvation of our souls :
 - a. Receive the words of God (*implant it*)
 - b. Put aside all wickedness
 - c. Apply the words in life (*live it*)
3. If we don't do this we are just fooling ourselves if we feel justified.

III. The bearing of fruit involves more than completing acts.

S#17.

A. Bearing fruit can be accomplished by the things we do not do.

S#18.

1. The parable of the sower referred to four soils which were for hearts.
 - a. Two soils were not conducive to growth ... hard exterior, hard interior.
 - b. Two were fertile ... one was cleared and the other was cluttered.
2. One fertile soil tried to add the good seed to things that were growing.
 - a. **Mark 4: 18** – And others are the ones on whom seed was sown among the thorns; these are the ones who have heard the word, **19** but the worries of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.
 - b. One cannot add Christ to **his life** and be fruitful for God.
3. Jesus referred to this as being willing to lose one's life.
 - a. **Mark 8: 35** – For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. **36** For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? **S#19.**
 - b. Vs-36 Makes it clear that Jesus is NOT referring to physical death.
4. The Apostle Paul referred to this same concept as being “crucified with Christ.”
 - a. **Gal. 2: 20** – I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;
 - b. Paul gave up his personal ambitions to accomplish the goals of God.

5. The seed that is planted on cleared and cultivated ground is productive. S#20.
 - a. **Mark 4: 20** – And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold.
 - b. Just like in James .. hear, accept, apply = bear fruit to God's glory instead of ours.

B. Just as putting aside personal ambitions is bearing fruit, so is putting sin aside.

1. In **Mark 4** the ground had to be cleared before fruit could be borne.
2. In **I Pet. 2: 1** wickedness had to be rejected before growth could occur.
3. In **Jas. 1: 21** all that remained of wickedness was put aside before implanting word.

C. As long as a Christian lives he must continue bearing fruit.

1. **Psa. 92: 12** – The righteous man will flourish like the palm tree, He will grow S#21.
like a cedar in Lebanon. **13** Planted in the house of the Lord, They will flourish in the courts of our God. **14** They will still yield fruit in old age; They shall be full of sap and very green, **15** To declare that the Lord is upright; He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.
2. The bearing of fruit does not depend upon external circumstances .. old age is one.

IV. The bearing of fruit will be a standard of judgment.

S#22.

A. Only those who cross the finish line can win.

1. **Rev. 2: 10b** – Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. S#23.
2. **II Tim. 4: 7** – I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; **8** in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

B. “Finishing the course” involves bearing fruit until the end.

1. When Jesus evaluates us, He will consider our fruit.
Matt. 7: 19 – Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. S#24.
2. We will not be judged on the quantity of fruit, but the use of our ability.
 - a. Parable of the talents .. the two talent man got the same reward as the five t. m.
 - b. Seeds on the good soil bore varying amounts of fruit .. 30, 60 100 fold.

WE MUST EXCEED THE LIMITS OF OUR COMFORT ZONE.

INVITATION :

S#25. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**Matthew 7: 15-23**

15 Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. **16** You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? **17** So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. **18** A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. **19** Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. **20** So then, you will know them by their fruits.

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. **22** Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' **23** And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.' "

Colossians 1: 3-12

3 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, **4** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; **5** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel **6** which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth; **7** just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, **8** and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10** so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; **11** strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.