

Fruitbearing

by Jim Cymbala

Jim Cymbala's sermon emphasizes the importance of spiritual growth and bearing fruit as a reflection of a believer's relationship with God.

Duration: 51:28

Scripture: Matthew 21:43, Colossians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 5:12, Hebrews 13:17

Topics: "Bearing Fruit"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of bearing fruit in the Christian life. They share a story about a woman who kept a secret and was consumed by guilt. The speaker highlights the urgency of bearing fruit and encourages listeners to be loving, helpful, and kind. They explain that God wants believers to focus on being rather than just doing, and that growth is essential for bearing fruit. The sermon concludes with a reminder that bearing fruit brings glory to God, and references a verse in Matthew where Jesus warns the Jewish leaders that the kingdom of God will be given to those who produce its fruit.

Transcript

I'm going to have the choir sing something at the end of the service. We don't see them that often, so we got to hear a little bit more music from them and but let's open God's Word and see where that leads us. I want you to turn in your Bible to our text which is found in Colossians chapter 1 verse 10.

Colossians 1 verse 10. Colossians is the last of those four books Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, then Colossians. They come after first and second Corinthians.

So in your New Testament go to Colossians chapter 1 verse 10. You know what to make it easier for us in this sequence. We are going to start with the thought of verse 9. Colossians 1 verse 9. Since the day we heard about you, for this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you.

Continuous prayer and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Now our text. And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way, how colon, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

Let's get the thought again. We pray this in order that you may live a life, there's an interesting phrase, worthy of the Lord. Not in order to be saved.

No, you're saved. But that you might live a life worthy of the Lord, may please him in every way, bearing fruit, the way you do it, bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God. When I was a kid living in Parkside Avenue in a kind of railroad apartment, that one bedroom.

But my mom and dad and my brother and my sister and I all grew up in that one bedroom apartment. I was very much into basketball. And PS 92 is located on, well there's an entrance on Parkside Avenue but the main entrance is on Winthrop Street between Bedford and Rogers.

And that playground was my home. That's where I spent most of my childhood. And I think it was in the third or fourth grade we were taken into the gym of PS 92 when I was going there was grade school.

And I first held a basketball and shot it. Well I fell in love with the game and gave myself to it. And Saturday mornings I would get up early and go to the park before anyone would go there.

And with my basketball, I always try to have a new one, a good one. I would do nothing but just shoot and shoot and shoot by myself. The other guys would come about 11 in the morning to start to play and then they would play all the way through the day.

If you won, you stayed on the court. If you lost, you got off. I was playing with guys older than me.

And even in the winter when it would snow, I would go and sweep off the court. My shovel off the court in the freezing cold, sometimes with gloves on, which is not good when you hold a basketball. And just to have it there to shoot.

And when my friends would come, I would be freezing cold but ready to play. Although sometimes I remember as a kid I would shoot so much by myself that my arms would get tired so that when my friends came, I would be a bit fatigued that way. I grew late, so I wanted to play basketball and I was preoccupied with how tall I was and whether I was growing.

I even heard from a friend that if you stretched every night or had somebody tie your hands and your legs and pull you, that you could grow. I tried that. Had my brother try to pull me, stretch me.

But I was constantly measuring myself to see if I was growing. And I would stand against the doors and the walls in my house and somebody would come with a ruler and then my brother would make a pencil mark or someone would make a pencil mark. And then you do that every three, six, nine months.

You could see that you're growing. I'm talking now 10, 11, 12, 13. I was happy to grow.

My mother wasn't happy. There were pencil marks all over the house in that little apartment. Well, the Bible talks here about growing.

Talks about this is the way that we please God. When we are born again and become a Christian, we become a living spiritual being. And just like a plant or a tree or a baby, like little babies I held, Isaiah and the rest of them, Suzanne, we can grow.

Something's wrong when a child or a plant or a tree doesn't grow. In other words, there's a new life principle within every Christian when you become a believer, when you're born again, so that progress is made not by doing things or climbing mountains or locking yourself away in in two hours and thinking that that will undo six months of bad living, unhealthy living. No.

God makes things grow, the Bible tells us. God makes things grow. So, maturity in a believer is merely they're growing the way God wants them to grow.

And immature Christians are Christians who have been born again, but they never grew. And they're 12 years in the Lord and they're acting like they're six months because they've never grown. And the way to please the Lord is to grow and to bear fruit.

God doesn't want you to do anything on your own because He knows you can't do anything on your own. That's why He sent Jesus and that's why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit. God knows how pitifully weak I am and carnal, so that He sent His Spirit into me and by the law of growth, I can bear fruit and that's what pleases Him.

So, as we see here in this passage that I want to point out to you, Michael, if you put up the next verse, there is a command. Do we have it there? It's coming. So is Christmas.

Well, let me read you the verse. We don't have it, Michael, or are we going to get it? Let me read to you the verse. 2 Peter 3 18, But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Do what? Grow in the grace. Grace doesn't just come into your life. You can grow in that grace.

You can grow in that knowledge. Peter says in his other letter, 1 Peter 2 2, Crave pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation. You ever see countries that are starving from famine? You ever see the babies? You ever see the hair color that they get? You ever see the bloated stomachs? You ever see the gauntness? They haven't been fed.

Are they alive? Yes. Are they humans? Yes. Are they healthy? No.

And that's the way Christians can be. Because, like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk so that by it you may grow up in your salvation. I wonder how old some of you are, how old some of us are in the Lord.

I'm not talking about how long you've been serving the Lord. I'm talking about what kind of growth process has been going on in our lives. Because through growth there's the bearing of fruit.

We're like plants that have to be watered, that have to be fed. So the Bible tells us as a command that we're to grow. Grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Now in most churches this is not a concept that is discussed. If you talk to any pastor, most pastors in New York City, and you say, how are you doing? How is the church doing? They will not even address the question of whether their members are growing. And to God that's the only thing that matters.

They will talk about how many are coming to the church, did they pay the bills, what kind of meetings, what's been going on, has there been good music, how's the choir doing, the choir won a Grammy and so on and so forth. But that has nothing to do about the thing that God's interested in, which is, is Esther growing or is she stagnant and suffering from spiritual malnutrition. In other words, God has put the mechanism of life in us and now He just wants that life to develop, right? And then that life will develop and produce fruit and that fruit will bring glory to His name.

With you doing nothing and the way God has done it, a choir, is He's done it in a way that He will get all the glory. You see, any time a preacher or Christians are strutting and saying, look what we've done, then something is out of whack. Because when God is producing fruit, who can you give glory to but God? It's

God who put the life in us.

How many say amen? It's God who develops that life, amen. And it's the fruit, the fruit comes from God. So the Bible tells us that we are like plants.

There's a verse in Hosea 14, 5, verse 6, Biophant 6, that I want you to notice. Look at it. I will be like the dew to Israel.

He will what? Blossom like a what? A lily. Like a cedar of Lebanon. Lebanon was known for its great cedar trees.

He will send down his what? His roots. His young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree.

His fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. Notice the language that's used there. I will be like the dew to Israel.

What does that mean? Moisture so that they can grow. He will blossom. God's people can blossom.

They can send down roots. His young shoots, you know what young shoots are? Those are the things that have potential. But God says they'll grow and produce fruit that you never knew you could produce.

From young shoots will come something beautiful. His splendor will be like an olive tree. His fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon.

And when you look at a beautiful tree or a beautiful plant, you know that the secret of that plant is just that the life is flowing through that. Rain is coming down. The food is getting nutrients from the soil.

And the tree is growing. And that's just a natural process. And God says I have for my people a supernatural process.

I want them to grow. Isn't one of the saddest things that some people who have been saved 20 years haven't changed an iota in the last 15 years? Their growth was for the first few years and then they hit a level and stopped growing. That's the problem in America.

It's not that folks aren't Christians. It's just that they're not growing and if they don't grow they don't produce fruit. So this growth is very important and God likens us to a plant.

When you ask most people how are you doing, you know what people say? I'm a Baptist. I go to Church of God in Christ. Praise God.

I'm a Pentecostal. These words are not in the Bible. These words are not in the Bible.

But that's how most people, if you ask them how are you doing in your spiritual life? I'll praise God. I go to the tab every Sunday. Go to the tab every Sunday.

It's not what the question is. The question is are we growing? How many want to grow? Come on. How many want to grow? God's put it already in us.

All He has to do is let it go. Let it be. Let it grow.

Now Scripture has a lot to say about this and it talks about even when you're 88 years old like my mom and she's a great example of this next verse which is found in Psalm 92 verse 12 and 14. Look at it up on the screen. The righteous will flourish like a what? A palm tree.

They will grow, see grow, flourish like a cedar of Lebanon. Who will do that? The righteous. They will still bear fruit in what? Old age.

They will stay fresh and green. That is very, very rare when you see an older person who's a Christian staying fresh and green. Most people when they get old, even when they're Christians unfortunately, they get dry.

But God says even in their old age they can still bear fruit. That's His plan. There's no retirement plan with Jesus.

God says right until the day you die, if you'll just walk with me and let me work in you, you will be bearing fruit. When you're 80, 85, 88, 90, 95, my mother's just warming up. They will stay fresh and green.

You know, Carol and I, we had a memorial service here for my aunt up in Connecticut. My mother's older sister, Aunt May, who passed away some months ago. But a few gathered here and we used just the lobby to kind of remember May.

Well, my mother came from a family of 10. Five girls, five boys in a little mining town in Pennsylvania. My grandfather died of black lung disease.

He was a miner. My mother, because of a shortage of money, had to drop out of school in the ninth grade and at 14 and a half she came to New York City from Pennsylvania, didn't know one person in New York City, just had a name of the person she was going to work for. No working papers, nada.

And because of a healing that drew the attention of my grandmother and the family, Jesus was presented to them and the family became Christian. But not all of the siblings are bearing fruit like my mom at 88, not to brag on my mom, but true. A lot of them were on fire for God in their 30s and 40s.

I remember that in church seeking God, but not all my aunts and uncles have stayed fresh and green. The growing process stops. You see, in Jesus it's different.

At a certain age you start running down biologically, but not with Jesus. You never have to run down. How many are happy? Say amen.

You never have to get old and gnarly and crusty and dry. You can stay fresh and green through your whole life. How many want to do that as long as you're living? You want to keep growing? There's things that you can see.

You know, Brother Stormont, who was preaching into his 90s, used to bless me that way because he was fresh and green. And I went to preach somewhere and he asked me to send him the tape. Oh yes, it was at the Southern Baptist Convention in Salt Lake City.

I spoke there five years ago, six years ago. It was the first non-Southern Baptist in history to speak at their big convention. Was it 10, 11,000 people? Carol, we were there in Salt Lake City.

Jonathan was with us. Remember that trip, Jonathan? Brother Stormont got the tape. He was 92 and I looked up to him.

And I called him a few weeks later. I knew he got the tape. I wouldn't have sent it to him unless he asked for it.

He said, Brother, and he started to cry, I got your tape. Jesus is doing some new things in me. I want to be a man of God.

He's 92. He was fresh and green. He might have died and his bones got creaky, but his spirit, fresh, green, growing, more of Jesus.

I've got to know the Bible better. You know why? See, when you hit a plateau and you think, I know this, praise God, I've been in church, I've been around people all my life who know the moving of the spirit, who know, and you know what? They know nothing. You know the people who really know? They don't.

They don't think they know anything. They want more. They want to grow.

Come on, let's put our hands together and thank God that we can grow. Sign of being fresh and young and green is that you want to grow. Now, if you don't grow, there's consequences.

Because when God puts life in somebody, he is grieved when they don't yield the fruit that he was waiting for from this growth. Look at this verse in Hosea 9 verse 16. It says, Ephraim is what? Blighted.

Their root is what? Withered. They yield no fruit. God says, I've done everything that my people needed, and they're not yielding fruit.

I delivered them, I put them in the land, I've blessed them, and what do I get from it? They yield no fruit. And maybe some of you are like that now. God comes to you and he's looking for fruit.

He's put his life in you, he's protected you, he's watered you, he's blessed you, he's picked you up a thousand times when you've fallen. But now he's saying, where's the fruit? You know the old ad, where's the beef? Well, God is, where's the fruit? How many believe he deserves fruit out of our lives after all that he's done? This is what Paul is saying. You've got to walk worthy of the Lord.

That means you can walk unworthy of the Lord, pleasing him in every way. That means Christians can walk in a way that displeases God. Obviously, Paul wouldn't have prayed that you would walk worthy if everyone automatically walked worthy.

He said, I'm praying that you might walk worthy of the Lord. After all that he's done for you, what are you going to do? Hurt him and disgrace him? No. Because of what he's done, walk worthy now because you're a Christian.

Don't walk unworthily. Don't live in junk. Don't live in dirt.

Don't be involved in things that nailed him to the cross. That's what he's saying to us. And the Bible tells us that this is what Christ is all about.

Us bearing fruit. Look at this verse and the next verse in John and it brings it into the New Testament. John 15-8, Jesus said, this is my Father's glory.

What's the Father's glory? That you bear much fruit, showing yourself to be my disciples. How do you show that you're a disciple? By bearing fruit. What does bearing fruit do? It brings glory to the Father.

We live in a day of the cult of worship. We live in the cult of worship. And I'm all for worship.

But you would think by talking to some people that the only way you glorify God is by lifting your hands for a half hour and going, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah. I'm all for that. I'll lift my hands with you.

But I'm not going to disregard the Word of God. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear what? Much fruit. Anybody can make you lift your hands, but it's how you live after you leave the church that shows how much fruit you're bearing.

How many say Amen? Come on, let's put our hands together now and affirm what God is saying. But today, because of the praise and worship industry and because of the praise and worship tapes, we have now the cult of worship, where worship has a predominance that is nowhere found in Scripture. When Jesus left, He didn't say, go and just stay in Jerusalem and worship for the next 30, 40 years.

This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourself to be my disciples. Now, brothers and sisters, where there's no fruit, there's either no life or something's drastically wrong. When you see no change in a person and no fruit coming from their lives, I don't care what they tell you.

Don't go by what they say. You'll know a tree by its fruit. We'll see that in a second.

But where there's no fruit coming out of a life, where there's no changed life, where there's no sweetness, no love, no roots, no growth, no change, no nothing, either the person is not a Christian or something is drastically, drastically wrong. They're on life support. Take that to the bank and remind yourself about it.

Don't go looking and picking fruit for other people. You know, we have a lot of people who just go up to everybody and say, let me pick your fruit. Let me look what you have.

Look in the mirror first. But the Bible tells us that bearing fruit is what gives God glory. These people in our church who go to shelters, six or eight shelters, and are ministering at night for nothing but for the cause of Christ and loving people in these women's shelters and other shelters and showing videos and ministering to people, mercy ministry.

The people who usher and serve and take the low place and are counting money right now and missing the service. They're bearing fruit. They're serving.

They're loving. They're helping. That's what gives God glory.

Don't think that God's glory is always an emotional thing when we all lift our hands. That's part of it. Yes, it's wonderful to praise God.

But while we're here on earth, He's looking at us to bear fruit. Let me bring this kind of to a close. This is why the law was insufficient.

Please, brothers and sisters, it's important to me because I have to answer to you. I was reading last night and it really provoked me to pray and said, God help me. I was reading, pastors, as I was waiting on the Lord at night.

I just opened my Bible to 1 Thessalonians 5, I think it's verse 12, where it says, respect those who work hard among you. It's talking about leaders who work hard. Who are over you in the Lord.

And Hebrews 13 tells us that there's a severe judgment for those who are in leadership because I'm not only responsible for myself, I'm now in a way responsible for you. Who admonish you, who teach you and correct you even at times. That's my job.

Boy, it just stunned me as I read it. But you've got to understand this. The reason the law couldn't do anything, even though the commands were true and holy and just, is that the law was written on stone and had no life.

So even though it was right, it couldn't bear fruit. Because a stone can't bear fruit. Look at this verse in Romans.

Very important verse. So my brothers, you also died to the law through the body of Christ. Death on the cross.

That you might belong to another, as in marriage, to Him who was raised from the dead in order that we might, what? Bear fruit to God. Who are we married to? Not the law, not Moses. We're married to Christ.

Why? Through that union we might bear fruit like these husbands and wives got together, lived together, and they produced these babies that we dedicated. Now, spiritually speaking, we belong to another who was raised from the dead. Why? Why am I married to Christ? Why am I saved? Not just to go to heaven.

I'm married to Him in order that I might bear fruit to God. God saved you that you might bear fruit. That you might grow.

That people might be able to come and eat from the good things God is doing. That the blessing of God might be on you, and when it gets hot, they'll come under the shade of what God is doing in your life. You'll be like a tree planted near the waters, living waters, fresh waters.

This is why we're married to Christ, to bear fruit. In America now, it's just church growth. How many people are you running? What does it matter how many people come if they're not bearing fruit? What does it matter if they're white people who don't like black people, or black people who can't stand white people, or Latinos who have no use for anybody? What does it matter how many of those you have? They're not bearing fruit.

What does it matter if they're sleeping around? You can have 10,000 if they're living corrupt lives. You don't have a... every Sunday. We're married to Christ so that we might bear fruit.

Is there fruit in your life? Now, do you come to church? That's an American question. Do you go to church? Where do you find that question asked in the Bible? And going to church is important. Forsake not the assembling of yourselves.

But that's not the main question. Am I right, Pastor Folks? The main question is this. Are you bearing fruit? Sister, that's... I'm responsible.

You've got to have fruit. Abraham, fruit, all of you. You've got to have fruit in your life.

And Jesus will do it. It's not up to you. Just let Him go.

Let the juice fly. Come on, put our hands together. When Jesus comes again, what is my wife going to do? Hand one of these Grammys to Him? He's not looking for Grammys.

Perverts win Grammys. So, obviously, a Grammy is not a big thing. Thank God for it.

It can be a platform to get the gospel out. But when Christ comes, it's about fruit. Not trophies.

Fruit. And He can do it. Now remember, no matter what anybody tells you, don't ever believe what people tell you.

What people tell you is not the truth. It's the fruit that matters. That's about anybody.

If someone raises the dead, that's proof of nothing. If they speak in tongues, nothing. If they can quote the whole New Testament, nothing.

It means nothing. That's not how you know the genuine. You only know the genuine one way.

Look at it. Book of John. Matthew.

Somewhere. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from the bushes or figs from thistles? I'm sorry, from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears what? Whenever you see bad fruit continually, it's a bad tree.

You can't go up to a tree filled with apples and say, what a tremendous orange tree this is. That's not an orange tree. Yes, it is.

I say it in the name of the Lord. That's an orange tree. I will not receive that as an apple tree.

You can talk all you want. By their fruit you'll know them. When a guy is a crook, he'll act like a crook.

A good tree cannot bear bad fruit. Cannot. And a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Listen to me.

Not every minister on the radio or guys preaching, praying for the sick and all of that are Christians. There are false prophets. There are wolves in sheep's clothing.

I went to a meeting years ago when I was 14 or 15 years old in the Academy of Music where the evangelist walked by, looked at me, told me to stand and read my mind. Read my mind. I'm telling you he read my mind.

He knew exactly what was in my heart. I found out when I got older that that night he was shacking up with a guy that I happened to know. He was homosexual.

By their fruit you'll know them. Not whether they raise the dead. Not whether they can get the organ to stir up everybody.

By their fruit you'll know them. Not whether they can move you in the pulpit and get you to stand and get you into all gyrations. That's not how you know the genuine.

By their fruit you'll know them. By their fruit you'll know them. Not by what people say.

Not by how many generations have been going to church. By their fruit you will know them. And if you think that verse and that passage is scary or solemn I should say, let me close or get to the close by showing you this one.

Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. How many? Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? In whose name? Not El Diablo. Not Buddha.

In the name of Jesus. They prophesied in the name of Jesus. Cast out demons in the name of Jesus.

Jesus didn't say it was spurious. He didn't turn to them and say, No, you are faking it. He never says that.

Listen to what he says. Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers.

Many will say. Not a few. Many.

Now, how demons can be set free and sicknesses can be healed and prophecy can be uttered and yet at the end of life have that terrible judgment word come on you, that's not for you and I to have to understand. All it is, it's a wake-up call to all of us. Works of power, it's not what it's about.

It's about fruit. Not the gifts, the fruit. By their fruit, you'll know them.

You judge a tree by its fruit. When somebody is bigoted and prejudiced, the tree is bad. I don't care if they go to church six times a week.

If someone never talks about the Lord and it's just wrapped up in the world and movies and the things of this world and never mentions Jesus, I wouldn't care if they were a minister's family member. Something's wrong. By their fruit, you'll know them.

Boy, this is good. This is a good word for all of us. Listen.

And this is why Israel, even though they were God's covenant people, for those who are in covenant theology, this is why God's own people had this word said to them by Jesus and then earlier by John the Baptist. These are my last verses for you. Let's go to them.

Jesus said in Matthew 21, 43, Therefore I tell you, this is to the Jewish leaders, that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its what? Fruit. Jesus came for the Jew. But when he saw no fruit and they rejected him, he said, Then the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a people who will bear what? Fruit.

Not go to church or worship or sing. Bear fruit. Look.

Certain trees look good. But then when you take a bite out of the orange, it's rotten. The fruit is bad.

So you can say, But look at the way the branches go up. So I can't eat a branch. I want some orange.

Or an apple. I want the fruit. So the kingdom will be taken away from you and given to a people.

And that's how it goes with churches. God goes along so long and then God says, That's fine. You're not going to bear fruit.

I'm pulling this tent down. And I'll find someplace else who will bear fruit. But I'm going to find someone that will bear fruit for my name.

John the Baptist, and I close, at the end, at the height of his ministry, said this word, The axe is already at the root of the trees. See, Jesus was coming. And every tree that does not produce good what? Fruit.

Fruit will be cut down and what? Thrown into the fire. Hey, brothers and sisters, this is getting hot. Be thrown into... I would say after all Christ has done for me, Carol, if you play, I would say that after all Jesus has done for you and me, the least he can expect us to do is to bear fruit.

And remember, it's not your fruit. For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, meekness, kindness, so on. Whose fruit is that? The fruit of the Spirit.

It's not you doing it. You can't bear fruit. Or you can bear fruit as the Holy Spirit works in you and produces fruit.

I can bear fruit only through Christ. Remember Jesus said, apart from me, you can do nothing. So that's why he put his Holy Spirit in us so that we could bear fruit and be kind to people.

That real typical New York, bear fruit. We've got to bear fruit now, right? We've got to be loving, helping, kind, talking, doing what we can. He cuts off every branch in me that bears fruit.

See, that's whom the Lord loves. No branch can bear fruit. It must remain in the vine.

I'm talking about heaven. That comes too. But I'm asking, how many here today say, I know that.

Imagine the choir is going to sing something just for you, to help you.

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