

# By Their Fruit - Part 2

by Paul Washer

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of bearing good fruit, living a life that is pleasing to God, and the dangers of preaching a bad Gospel that leads people astray.*

**Duration:** 36:41

**Scripture:** Proverbs 2:21-22, Isaiah 6:3, Matthew 7:13-14, Matthew 7:21-23, Matthew 22:37-40, Matthew 28:18-20, John 6:66-68

**Topics:** "Discernment"

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## Description

In this sermon, the pastor emphasizes the power and impact of the word of God. He describes how the word cuts and breaks before it heals and binds. The pastor challenges the listeners to examine their souls and question whether they are truly living in obedience to God's will. He warns against being selective in following only what aligns with culture and personal desires, and emphasizes the importance of submitting to the truths that may contradict and challenge us. The pastor also highlights the consequences of rejecting God's law and the words of Christ, emphasizing the need to build our lives on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

Now, we go on, and this is an amazing passage, verse 18. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Here we go back again, especially in our convention, doing what? Teaching half of something.

How many times have I heard preachers say, and rightly say, to lost people, Listen, until you're converted, you don't have any good works. That's true. And then they'll go on to say, a lost man who is without Christ, does not have the Spirit of God, has not been born again, cannot produce good works.

It is impossible. Now, it doesn't mean that a lost man just continuously does horrifying things that even society recognizes as horrifying. He might actually, on the outside, look like he does some good things.

But his style of life is one of not producing good fruit. He can't do it. Why? Because essentially, in his nature, in his being, his ontology, he is not good.

That's what we tell people, and rightly so. We ought to tell them the other part. And what's the other part? This we ought to tell to professing Christians.

And it's this, a good tree cannot produce bad fruit. Now, be consistent logically. When he says a bad tree cannot produce good fruit, what is he saying? He's saying that a lost man cannot produce fruit pleasing to God as a style of life and in a real and genuine way.

All right, let's take the logical opposite. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit. What is he saying? If you truly have been changed by the power of God, if you truly have been born again, it does not mean that you will be perfect, but it will mean that it will be impossible for you to live a style of life marked out by bad fruit.

It will be impossible because you've become a new creature. It doesn't mean that you cannot sin. It doesn't mean that you cannot fall into sin.

But what it means is you cannot remain there and practice it as a lifestyle because salvation is more than just a human decision by which you jumped out of the line going to hell and jumped into the line going to heaven. It is a supernatural work of God, as I have said, on par, if not greater, than the very manifestation of the power of God on the day he created the universe. The same power that resurrected Jesus Christ from the dead is the power working when a man is regenerated, when he's converted.

It's very, very important. Now, he goes on to 19. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

How come I never hear anybody on TV preach this? How come in many of the mega churches that I have been in, I do not hear this preached? How come in many of the most popular churches in the most popular communities around this country that I've been in, if this is preached, people are startled because they haven't heard it in the pulpit in years and years and years and years. Why is it that Jesus spoke three times more about hell than he did heaven? And yet in the pulpits in America today, in all the pretty fancy social churches, you hear about heaven all the time and never hear about hell. Now, if you're going to be consistent and follow Jesus, his methodology, his teaching, his preaching and everything else, then you should be like him.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit. Look at this. Some of those trees are saying, Lord, Lord.

Some of those trees are going to church every Sunday. Some of those trees are pillars of community. Some of those trees have been, you know, established members of the church ever since it's been here in Baton Rouge.

But Jesus doesn't say anything but one important thing. You don't bear good fruit, you're going to hell. It's not because you get to heaven by means of your works.

But it means this. If you have truly believed in Jesus Christ and the salvation, you have been regenerated by the power of God. And the evidence of that regeneration is that you're going to live a different life.

Cut down and thrown into the fire. How many times have I heard, how many times have I heard preachers saying God doesn't throw anybody in hell? How many times have I heard that? If you go to hell, it's against everything God ever tried to do. Well, let me ask you a question.

Who's throwing them in hell? They're throwing each other in there. Are angels throwing them in there? And God saying, no, please don't throw them in there. Who's throwing them in hell? Who's cutting them down? Maybe Jesus gives us a little bit of a hint when he says, listen, you don't fear those Romans who can crucify you, who can cut your head off, who can skin you alive and boil you in oil, who can crucify you

on a tree, pour tar all over your body and use you as a street lamp, because that's what they did.

He said, don't fear them. I'll tell you here who to fear. Fear God who can not only kill the body, but kill the body and throw you in hell.

Again, you know, we just really need to get some scissors out and cut a lot of this out of here so that our churches... I mean, if our churches aren't going to conform to God's word, then maybe we just ought to conform God's word to the church or to the preachers in them. Some of you probably tonight think I'm facetious. Some of you think I'm smart aleck.

But just answer one question for me. Did Jesus say this or did he not? Can you actually go through the New Testament and justify many of the things that you're always hearing? My dear friend, God is constantly warning about that second coming and the great day of judgment, and he's warning about the great surprise. And he's constantly warning about all those who will wake up having listened to false teachers who tickled their ears and told them everything they wanted to hear and made them feel good about themselves and everything else.

He's always warning about that. He goes on and he says, Sow them by their fruit, you will know them. Verse 21, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Now, what does that mean? We need to understand Hebrew literature, Hebrew mindset, Hebrew thought here. You see, the Jews used what we call Hebrew parallelisms or repetition. For example, we get to Isaiah and we hear, what do we hear? This one attribute of God in Isaiah 6, 6. Holy, holy, holy.

We get to the book of Revelation. What do we hear? Holy, holy, holy. Notice we never hear God is love, love, love.

Notice we never hear God is merciful, merciful, merciful. Notice we never hear God is nice, nice, nice. We hear God is holy, holy, holy.

There's a reason for it. The form of repetition is the way in which a Jew emphasize something. Let's go to Hebrew parallelisms.

For example, I'll make up a proverb. The wicked shall not dwell in the land. The wicked shall be cut off.

Now, what am I saying? I'm saying the same thing. I'm repeating. And in my repetition, I'm changing just a little bit to either add emphasis or define what I've said in the first phrase.

It's a way in which a Jew emphasizes something. So when Jesus says, many will come before me on that day and say, Lord, Lord. He is not talking about people who on the earth never said anything about Jesus and never identified themselves with Jesus.

No. He's talking about people who emphatically declare Jesus Christ was Lord. He's saying not everyone who emphatically and think about this.

Most professing Christians don't even emphatically profess to be Christians. They never stand up at work. They never even in church.

You can't get them to stand up. But he says many will come before me on that day. But not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

What does that mean? Our profession of faith carries no weight. You can emphatically declare Jesus to be Lord. It doesn't mean you're going to heaven.

What is the evidence that you're going to heaven? And he says this, 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. Now, does that mean we get to heaven by our means of our works? Not at all. What does it mean? Again, it means that salvation is a supernatural work of God and faith in Jesus Christ being born again, being converted, truly becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ is a supernatural work of God that will produce evidence.

What is that evidence? Being concerned about and actively participating in the will of God. Not just making a profession of faith and then attending some church on Sunday and being kind of a nice person. It's talking about radically following Jesus Christ.

Now, 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. Please, if you have shut me off now, some of you probably have, if you have shut me off because you simply just hate everything I'm saying, then just, I beg you, go home and read this passage over and over. Who are these people who emphatically declare Jesus to be Lord and yet are going to hell? Because Jesus says they're going to hell.

Unless you've got a third place out there for them to go, they're not going to heaven. Who are they? Ask yourself this. 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.

Oh, the great divider is not Moses. The great problematic person who you wouldn't want to invite to dinner is not the Apostle Paul. The troublemaker in Israel is not Elijah.

It's Jesus. It's Jesus. Who do they say I am? Who do you say that I am? He's the scandal of Christianity.

He's the one that causes us all the problems. He's the one that causes us all the problems. Unless, of course, you muzzle him.

You truncate him. Unless, of course, you paint another picture of him that's not the biblical one so that everyone will feel good about it, which is primarily what's being done. In most churches, the God of most churches looks more like Santa Claus than he does Yahweh.

And people like it that way. Sometimes I'm asked to go and teach on the attributes of God, and I'll always say, look, Pastor, you probably don't want me to come to your church and do that. And they go, what do you mean? I say, we'll divide the church.

He goes, how can we? I mean, we're Christians. What do you mean we're going to divide the church? It's not like you're preaching in an academic setting. What are you talking about? I said, Pastor, if I begin to teach on the holiness of God, the justice of God, and the sovereignty of God, when I get through those three things, you're going to have longstanding members popping up all over that church screaming out, that's not my God, and I could never love a God like that.

But what God exactly are they loving? Well, first of all, when they say that this is what you do, you ask them, please, sir, please, ma'am, open up the Bible and describe to me God. First of all, they can't do it. So I say, okay, ma'am, sir, you can't describe to me biblically God.

Now, how do you know about Him? Well, it's just I know God's this way. Oh, what's right in your own eyes? Please help me out here, sir, ma'am. I'm doing the best I can to understand your theology and where it comes from.

What's the basis for your belief in who God is? If it's not Scripture, then what is it? Or is it that you have created your own God and He's nothing more than a figment of your imagination and you've made Him to look just like you? C.S. Lewis said one time, this God's not a tame lion. That's what everyone wants, a domesticated God that they can put in their pocket and carry Him around. Well, that's not who He is.

Not at all. Now, it goes on. And he says, 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? Now, here's a very important balance to everything Jesus is saying.

First of all, He's talking about these people who they declare Jesus to be Lord, but there's just nothing in their life. There's just nothing. And they prove by the nothing in their life the rejection of God's commands, the acceptance of some of them that agree with their circumstances and what they want to do.

They accept it in part showing that they're rebellious in the heart still. So He's got this one group of people who profess Jesus to be Lord and there's no fruit in their life, but then He comes back around and He gets another group of people. People who profess Jesus to be Lord and are involved in all kinds of religious activity.

And boy, do they show their true colors. In what way? Now, I'm going to put a hypothetical situation before you. I assure it's hypothetical.

Okay? Let's say, just for a moment, that there's this true believer, truly been born again all his life, served the Lord since His conversion. I mean, truly born again, okay? Really has been. And he goes before Jesus on Judgment Day.

And Jesus looks down at him and says mistakenly, depart from Me. I never knew you. Now again, I said it's hypothetical.

Now, if He said that to you, what would be your response? If a true believer heard those words, depart from Me, I never knew you. Do you think a true believer in Jesus Christ who understood the Gospel would say, hey, now wait a minute. I preached to thousands of people.

I cast out demons. I performed all kinds of miracles. I was in church every time the doors were open.

I was soul winning. I was part of the WMU. I was this and I was that.

Do you honestly think a true believer would put that forth as their case? Now, what would a true believer say if God looked down at them and said depart from Me. I never knew you. He would say, Lord, I was born in sin and in sin my mother conceived me.

I have broken every law and I know Your judgments are just, but I believed that I had thrown myself upon Your only begotten Son and trusted in His perfect work on that tree for me. You see what's going on here? Their heart's being revealed, isn't it? What are they trusting in? Their religious activity. They think they're somehow justified before Christ and their discipleship is true because they're doing all sorts of stuff and even pretty miraculous stuff.

And yet we see with their very answer their heart is revealed and they do not believe nor have they trusted in anything but themselves. Now, I'm going to get to the scariest part of this. Verse 23, and then I will declare to them I never knew you.

I hear so many people say, I know Jesus. I don't think that's the issue. I think the issue is does Jesus know you? Let me give you an example.

Let's say that tonight I hop on a plane and fly to the White House to see my friend George Bush. At least that's what I tell everybody. I walk up to the gates of the White House and I, you know, want to see George.

And obviously a guard is going to be there. And I'm going to say, I need to see George Bush. And they go, yeah, right.

Am I going to get in? Because I say I know George Bush? Not at all. I'm not getting in. I can stand there all day and say I know George Bush.

I am not getting in the White House. But if George Bush comes out of the White House and points at me and says, I know Paul Washer. Let him in.

I'm going in. So it's really not important if I say I know George Bush. The real question is, does George Bush know me? The big issue is not do I say I know Jesus? The real question is does Jesus know me? Now, let's get to something very important.

I want to talk about two things here for a moment. The knowledge of God and confessing Jesus as Lord. If I forget the last one, please remind me because I'm prone to do that.

First of all, I never knew you. What does that mean? I mean, He's omniscient. He knows everything.

The Word. I never forget. This is written in Greek.

These are Jews speaking. Jews writing it. What does it mean? The Word is used with regard to sexual intimacy even.

What does it mean? I never had an intimate fellowship with you. Depart from me. I never had intimate fellowship with you.

We never walked together. We never talked together. Depart from me.

Jesus says a lot more than just praying that little prayer, isn't it? That's what makes me so mad about our preaching today. You get someone to walk down an aisle to repeat a prayer. You popishly declare them to be saved and then they become a two-fold son of hell and you still declare them to be saved.

Jesus said, I never had a personal, intimate, loving, ongoing, vital relationship with you. If we were to dismiss this church right now and knock on every door in this county, we'd find people in gross immorality and everything, but they would tell us what? Oh, don't worry about me, preacher. I done did that.

I done got that. You got what? A flu shot? You got her done? Is that what you did? You see what we've done? And it's the responsibility of preachers. Bad ones.

The whole lot of us. Evangelists, pastors, on and on. Who for years, men preaching, who did not understand the Gospel, nor the results of preaching a bad one.

I done did that. Jesus said, I never had an intimate, personal... Well, see, you need to understand something, folks. Now listen to me.

There are not three groups of people in the New Testament church. There are not three groups of people here tonight. There are not spiritual Christians, carnal Christians, and lost people.

There are spiritual Christians and lost people here tonight. Can a Christian fall into carnality? Yes. Can he live a style of life of carnality? Absolutely not.

All Christians grow. All Christians bear fruit. All Christians are broken.

And all Christians experience the loving discipline of a father when they stray, and we all stray. Now, another thing. Let me talk about this if you confess Jesus as Lord.

You know, if you believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, and you confess Him to be Lord, you will be saved. What does that mean today? I'll tell you what it means to most Southern Baptist evangelists. Do you want to go to heaven? Yes? Then pray this prayer.

Well, I kind of feel uncomfortable praying out loud. Well, then just pray to yourself. You know, pray in your heart.

Well, I don't think I know how to do that. Well, then I'll pray the prayer, and you can repeat it. Well, I feel kind of uncomfortable.

Oh, alright, I'll tell you what. I'll pray the prayer, and if it's what you want to say to God, squeeze my hand. You think I'm kidding.

That's evangelism in America today. What did He mean when He said, listen, if you believe God has resurrected Him from the dead, and you confess Him as Lord, you're saved. Let's just say we're all a bunch of carpenters.

Roman Empire. First century. We've all professed faith in Jesus Christ.

We're working on some big building there in Rome. All of a sudden, we hear this noise. Soldiers marching.

We turn around, and all of us knew it was coming sooner or later. We're pretty much terrified, because here comes a group of Roman soldiers, and they're carrying this big altar on their back. There's a bunch of them.

They've got it on poles, and they're carrying it on their back. And they get up to where all of us are working, and they stop, and they take it off their shoulders, and they put it down. And on this altar is a little bit of fire burning in this big bronze bowl.

And then there's this little bit of incense there. Now, all of us have got to make a decision, because there's also a guy standing beside there with a big old sword. And what each of us are going to have to do is make a tremendous decision.

We're going to go up there, and we're going to grab a little bit of incense, and we're going to throw it in that fire, and we're going to go, Caesar is Lord. Or, we're going to walk up there, if we're true Christians, we're going to stand there, and we're going to go, Jesus Christ is Lord. And they're going to take off our head.

And then the next one's going to have to walk up there and go, Jesus Christ is Lord. And they're going to take off your head. A little bit different than this American evangelism, isn't it? What he's saying is if you believe to such a degree that this really is the Son of God, and He died for your sins, and the evidence of that is God's vindication of Him by raising Him from the dead, and you publicly profess Him to be Lord, even though your next breath will be gone because your head will be removed from your shoulders, you're a Christian.

That's a lot different than the puny, pathetic things we teach today. Watch those megachurches clear out pretty fast. And guess what? It's coming.

It's coming. I remember during the war in Peru when I served there. Christians were being martyred.

Men were being slaughtered. I'm an Illinois farm boy. For me to get up and walk out of my house and step over dead people is a hard thing to stomach.

And I can remember one of the old pastors. The Maoists were trying to take over the entire country. They were killing Christians.

And I remember one of the old pastors coming to the pulpit, and he said, men, if we have a message to preach, he said this in Spanish, hombres, si tenemos un mensaje que tenemos que predicar, if we have a message to preach, it is this. We must be prepared to suffer and die for the sake of our Lord. You just feel a shiver run down your back because you realize these might be talking about you.

That's a lot different than squeeze my hand. It's pathetic. Not what the liberals have done.

Not what bad politics have done. Not what Hollywood has done. But what Southern Baptist preachers have done.

And then I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. Now, what does that mean? Lawlessness.

It's a Greek particle, ah. And there's a word. Does anyone know what it is? Namas.

How can we translate this? I'm going to give you kind of a dynamic translation of this. Depart from me, those of you who called yourself my disciples, but you lived as though I never gave you a law to obey. I just described the greater part of evangelical Christendom in America.

You who claim to be my disciples, but do not submit to my law, my wisdom, my precepts, my truth. Wow. For those of you who are theologians and things, this does not have anything to do with the law, new covenant controversy.

This has to do with this. Depart from me. If you say, you are my disciple, but you never submitted to my lordship by submitting to the will that I revealed to you in my written word, the full counsel of God.

And beware. Be very aware, young person. Be very aware, old person, when you submit to the part that you like, but the other part you brush off because you say, I don't understand it or I don't agree with it.

You don't agree with it because it cramps your lifestyle and you show yourself to be a rebel. Now, I'm not going to expound on verses 24 through 27, but I will say this. It is greatly interpreted.

It is interpreted wrongly. Usually this thing about the house on the sand and the house on the rock, how is it interpreted? Well, if you're a Christian that builds his life on the Word of God, your life will be stable and strong and consistent. And if you're a Christian who doesn't build his life on the Word of God, your life is going to have trouble.

It will be unstable. It won't be consistent. There won't be blessing.

That's not what Jesus is teaching at all. What is He teaching? The one who builds his house upon the rock is the man who is saved, builds his life upon the Gospel, and when the judgment of God comes, he is saved. The man who builds his house on the sand, who is that? A lost man who will die in hell when the judgment of God comes because he has rejected the law and the words of Christ.

Now, I need to prove that, don't I? Okay? Look at this. Starting in verses 13 and 14, what do we have? We can say two gates. In a sense, there's many, but we have two gates.

The one true one and then all the others are grouped together as false. We have one gate that leads to life. That is Jesus Christ.

We have all the other gates that lead to destruction. Then we have what? Two ways. We have a way that is broad and it leads unto death and destruction, hell.

We have a way that is narrow and it leads to life. Then what do we have? We have two different trees. We have a good tree that proves it's a good tree by bearing good fruit, and we have a bad tree that shows it's a bad tree by bearing bad fruit, and it is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Then we have those who profess Jesus Christ to be Lord and demonstrate that the Lordship is genuine in this sense that they obey the will of the Father. Then we have another group over here who just as emphatically declare Jesus Christ to be Lord, but what? They know what they're saying because they do not submit to the will of the Father. And then we get down here and we get to 24 and what do we have? We have a man who builds his house upon a rock.

When the judgment of God comes, he is saved. We have another man who builds his house upon the sand. When the judgment of God comes, he is destroyed.

You see how easy it is to take a passage of Scripture and take the blade off of it, dull it, so that everybody walks out and can go to Ryan's Cafeteria or whatever cafeteria you go to on Sunday morning and not think anything about what was said. You can do expositional preaching and not preach this thing. When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching.

Amazed. They didn't sit around and say, oh man, He's a great orator. They didn't sit around and say, I love those illustrations.

They were amazed. They were shocked. They were astonished.

Some were appalled. Some were happy. And some were so mad they just couldn't wait to hear someone else cry out crucify Him.

Jesus Christ's preaching was like ripping a garment in two every time He spoke. And when the great multitudes followed Him, He always turned around with a word that was so hard that most of them would go away. Now, isn't that completely different than the way we do church today? And then when the great multitude would walk away from Him saying these words of His are too hard, He would look at His disciples and say, do you want to go too? Do you want to go too? And because of the grace of God working in their life, they said things such as, and where will we go? You have the Word of Life.

It's an amazing thing, this book. When you don't temper it, when you don't domesticate it, when you're not seeking popularity or some way to maintain your employment, when your greatest desire is not growing a big church, but glorifying the God of Heaven, this book is an amazing thing. Where are you tonight? Where are you? If you are fiercely angry tonight at what I have said, ask yourself this question.

Are you angry at me? Okay, that's okay. Let's say that everything you think about me right now is true. That I'm arrogant and that I'm too hard and that I'm proud.

Let's say everything that you're thinking, you don't like me at all. Now, everything you're thinking is true. Let's just say that.

That still does not excuse you from this question. What I said tonight, is it true? Because if it is, the fact that I am arrogant and everything else does not change the fact that you will still be judged by this same truth. And then when you think of the Christianity you know and what you've heard here tonight, ask yourself this question.

When was the last time in your church you heard a word from God that burdened your heart, that stung you, that disturbed you, that agitated you, that moved you? And if it has been a very, very long time, then ask yourself why. Because the Word of God says that that's exactly what the Word of God does. It cuts and it breaks before it heals and it binds.

It disturbs even down to the very depth of someone's bone and marrow. So ask yourself these questions. Is it well with your soul if Christ came tonight? Would you stand before Him and hear, Well done, my good and faithful servant.

Enter into the joy of your Master. Or would you hear, Depart from Me. You said you were My disciple, but you did not submit to one thing.

Or, the most dangerous, you submitted to only those things that your culture and your own heart agreed with. And you did not submit to the things that would have proven true loyalty. The things that contradicted you and cut your life and hampered every dream your carnal mind has ever had.

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