

Good Fruit

by Richard E. Bieber

The sermon emphasizes the importance of bearing good fruit in our lives, which is the result of a heart that is whole toward Jesus, remembers the forgotten ones, and is steadfast.

Scripture: Isaiah 61:1, Matthew 7:15, Luke 6:43, John 15:16, Galatians 5:22

Topics: "Fruit Of Faith", "Judgment And Works"

Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches on the importance of bearing good fruit as a true disciple of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that in the final judgment, our works will be tested, and only the fruit that glorifies God and was done with a pure heart will endure. Bieber highlights the three possibilities of fruit: good fruit that pleases God, bad fruit that comes from impure hearts, and the pitiful state of producing no fruit. He stresses the need for hearts wholly devoted to Jesus, remembering the forgotten ones, and remaining steadfast in faith to bear lasting fruit.

Transcript

Read: Matthew 7:15-23

In this passage the Lord not only shows us how we can tell the difference between false prophets and true ones, but how He tells the difference between true disciples and phonies. He doesn't need a computer. And when the time comes for us to give an answer for what we did with our lives, the arguments many of us have been using for years to justify ourselves will mean very little.

"But Lord, don't you remember, I got saved. I accepted you as my personal Savior.

I went to fellowship, read the Word, prayed. Lord, maybe I wasn't perfect, but you know I've never been a hypocrite."

And the Lord will ask one question:

"Where's the fruit?"

There will be numberless people who asked Jesus into their lives, who got all kinds of fellowship, were exposed to excellent teaching, said their prayers, read their bibles. Yes, people who did impressive things - built churches, wrote books - yet nothing they ever did will survive the Light of that day. It will all burn up.

In the final test, not of somebody else's life, mind you, but of your life, there are only three possibilities.

Good fruit. Bad fruit. No fruit.

1. Every sound tree bears good fruit.

Works that won't have to be destroyed.

Things done that will remain when this temporal world collapses and will keep right on glorifying God through all eternity.

Living souls that found their way from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God because you were true to the name of Jesus and to the shame of His cross.

Good fruit that pleases the eye of the Living God doesn't usually look like very much in this world,

- even to other believers, - even to your own eyes, but because it was done with a pure heart, done to please only the Master, because you really love Him and want to do His will, it will shine when all the false lights of this world go out.

The only reason God keeps us on this earth is to bear good fruit.

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and ordained you that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should abide."

2. But much of the fruit that is ostensibly brought forth to the glory of God will turn out to be bad fruit.

When the Lord picks it up and examines it, it will suddenly look very different from the way it appeared to eyes of flesh.

The false prophets, for instance, bear all kinds of fruit. They produce. And the fruit they produce looks remarkable from a distance. Yet,

On that day many will say to me, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?" And then will I declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from me you evildoers."

If your heart isn't right, you can sit under the best teaching in the world, yet the only kind of fruit that will ever come from you will be bad.

If your relationship with the Master isn't right, you can do mighty works and speak with an eloquent tongue the marvelous truths of the gospel, but your fruit will be bad.

3. Most pitiful of all is the tree that produces no fruit.

The only time we see Jesus pronouncing immediate judgment on anything during His entire ministry is when He looks for fruit from a fig tree and finds none.

"No man eat fruit from you henceforth forever."

Leaves but no fruit. Talk. Pretenses but no substance. And the tree withers.

The man who produces nothing with his talent of gold is stripped even of what he has.

"Every branch of mine that bears no fruit He takes away."

But it's not only on the last day that we are known by our fruit. In the sight of God we are known by our fruit right now.

- That's what tells whether we are disciples of Jesus Christ or a bunch of half-baked Pharisees.

That's what indicates to God at this moment whether the Cross of His Son really means anything to us.

Don't say to yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father." God can raise up children to Abraham from the stones.

Don't say to yourselves, "We're Christians. We belong to the Body." Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

To produce good fruit it's not a matter of how much we rush around, or how clever we are. Good fruit is a matter of the heart. A sound tree, a tree that is inwardly whole, cannot bear evil fruit, nor can an evil-hearted tree bear good fruit.

....who, hearing the Word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience.

If the heart is right, the fruit will come.

You won't have to go to seminars on fruit bearing.

You won't have to study techniques in evangelism.

You won't forever have to be in a state of frenzy.

You won't have to all the time be chasing after some new gimmick.

Keep thy heart with all diligence. For out of it are the issues of life.

Keep your heart the way it should be and all the needful things will follow.

You will bear fruit that will abide the day of His coming, that will stand when He appears,

if you keep your heart in three areas:

1. If you will keep your heart whole toward Jesus.

- Single.

- Undivided.

- Fixed only on Him.

If any man comes to me and does not hate his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life he cannot be my disciple.

Crucified to the world - dead to everything but the Lord.

Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it remains alone, but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit.

And unless we die to ourselves and the world just as surely as our Lord did, we cannot bear fruit.

- Stop trying to win both ways.

- Stop trying to serve God and mammon.

If you try to follow Jesus and your own ambition, whatever fruit you produce will be bad.

Even if you fill your tent with 20,000 souls and write three religious best sellers, even if the whole city comes to your funeral, God will declare your fruit as impure as your heart.

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me and I in him, he it is who bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

Is your heart pure toward Jesus?

Is it really stripped of its own vanity; and ambition, and lust?

Is it satisfied to walk that low road with the King and do things His way and trust that He will make that seed grow, that He will confirm those words He gave you to speak even if not one living soul sees or appreciates what you're doing?

A lot of us are letting ourselves get scattered and divided, all the time torn between the demands of this friend and that loved one, and this craving and that fear, instead of really abiding in what we know to be the will of Jesus and trusting that He will take care of all the conflicts.

"Abide in me and I will abide in you."

"As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me."

2. We need to have a heart that remembers the forgotten ones exactly as Jesus does.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed.

Go into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind.

Then the King will say to those at His right hand, "Come, O blessed of my Father inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink,

I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.

You remembered the people the rest of the world forgot.

If we're so busy edifying ourselves, building up our churches, running to Lansing and Washington about welfare reform that we don't have time for the forgotten ones under our nose, never mind what we say with our mouths, our hearts are far from God.

Slow down and start taking time with that sad little lady in the convalescent home, that man down the street who sits on his porch all day and has no one to talk to but his dog, that child who doesn't know a single adult who cares about him. Get your pen out and write some letters to people you know who are forgotten - maybe your own mother or grandfather.

3. A heart that is steadfast.

He will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not fail or be discouraged until he has established justice in the earth.

And those who follow Him bear in their lives the marks of His steadfastness. They keep looking to Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, and they don't grow weary or faint-hearted.

There may be times when we need a rest, when we need to be refreshed. But when our spirits get stale and sloppy and apathetic, when we start saying to ourselves, "What does it matter?" "I

don't care." "What's the use!", this is a sign that we've not been keeping our heart with all diligence.

We've allowed our heart to slip out of communion with the Strength of our life.

Don't be blaming God and feeling sorry for yourself. Bring your heart back to Calvary. Surrender it back into the hands of your Lord. Do it now!

They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.

Who, hearing the Word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart and bring forth fruit with patience.

God didn't gather us together in a Body to impress the world, or our friends, or our enemies. God gathered us to edify us so that we can go and bear good fruit. If we're willing to settle for good fruit, nothing else just good fruit, it will happen - even today.

And every day we'll get up in the morning and go forth to do the things the Master has given us to do. And there will be fruit. And that fruit will remain when every solid thing in this world has turned to smoke and ashes.

You did not choose me, I chose you and ordained you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should remain.

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