

## **Good Fruit**

**July 14,2019**

### **Luke 6:43-45**

43 "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; 44 for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. 45 The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

Personally I love Luke chapter 6. It is rich in lessons from Jesus on how to treat others. The chapter starts with Jesus violating Sabbath regulations. Jesus is breaking the rules. He has a good reason for doing so. I will attempt to explain what I understand to be the logic behind the actions of Jesus. Imagine a target. It has a bull's-eye in the center with rings that expand out from the center. Jesus aims for the center. The bulls-eye is the will of God and human regulations are the outer rings. They are away from the center. So, they can be classified as off center. When Jesus breaks the Sabbath law Jesus knows that these regulations are off center. Jesus knows that God is more concerned with the care of others than these rules and regulations.

The Bible focuses on relationship between the individual and God, between the nation and God, and between one another. Luke writes the story of Jesus. In his writing he shows that the focus on his opponents is on the rules and regulations. Whereas, the focus of Jesus is on relationship: love, forgiveness, compassion, etc. The Pharisees object to Jesus, and his group of followers, breaking the Sabbath law. However, not observing the Sabbath law is not the problem. The problem is that the complainers are off centered theologically. Actually the whole religious establishment was theologically off center. Therefore, their thinking is off track. So, they blame Jesus.

Then in Luke chapter 6 Jesus spends all night in prayer, he chooses his 12 disciples and then he gives the sermon on the Plain. In the sermon Jesus gives a very powerful lesson on how to treat others. It is about relationship. This is some Scripture to live by. Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you, give to everyone who begs from you, and the Golden Rule, do to others as you would have them do to you.

Today's Scripture takes place after Jesus teaches some very, very hard lessons. It is some of the most difficult teaching to follow. Jesus addresses the character of the person. If the spirit of the individual is focused on Jesus, if you have surrendered your life to Christ, then it is not hard to follow. It is not hard to follow the most difficult lessons because it is all about the person's character. Today's Scripture is about character. Jesus uses a fruit metaphor for people. A good tree does not bear bad fruit; a bad tree does not bear good fruit; they are known by what they produce. This is very simple, basic and easy to understand. A good person produces good and an evil person produces evil. It is about the character of the individual.

In the Secret Place devotional on April 25<sup>th</sup> I learned something new. Art students are taught 9 different ways to look at a tree. The first four are north, east, south, and west. The fifth way is to look at it from the bottom up. The sixth is from the top to the bottom. The seventh is internally from the trunk out. The eighth perspective is from climbing up another tree. The ninth way to view a tree is from the end of a branch dangling like a fruit. Then the lesson that the author gave is that through the different ways you look at it your perspective changes. However, no matter how many ways you look at it, the tree itself does not change. I thought the lesson was

very interesting. You can change your clothes, your education, lose weight, or whatever, but they are all perspectives. You are still the same person.

When we get what Jesus is teaching, the lesson becomes profound. Jesus has keen brilliance and insight. You exhibit the fruits of the Spirit. The things that you do and the words that you say. Your treatment of others. Your devotion to Jesus and the Bible. Your due diligence, attitude, and integrity. They are all based on your Spirit. What you produce is a matter of who you are. If you are like Christ then it is easy to follow the hard lessons.

The contemporary lesson for us is to be theologically centered on Jesus. Focus on his teachings. What did Jesus say? What did Jesus do? What would Jesus do? Be who Jesus tells you to be. Do what Jesus tells you to do. Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who abuse you. Focus on the center first. When you slip up, as we all do, we have Jesus to show us the way, the Holy Spirit to help us, and the grace of God to forgive us.