

Leading Fruitful Lives

2017-10-22 - Year A - Pentecost 10-5 - The Rev. Christopher Klukas

Isaiah 5:1–7; Psalm 80:(1–6), 7–19; Philippians 3:14–21; Matthew 21:33–44

The Master is Looking for Fruit

- Blueberry bushes in Pitcairn
- The passage we read from Isaiah today is a song about fruitfulness.
- vv. 1-2 Isaiah paints a picture of a perfect vineyard. Good, fertile soil. Land cultivated in just the right way. All of the best equipment. This is the kind of vineyard that you would expect to produce really good grapes for really good wine.
- v. 2 The vineyard does produce fruit, but it produces bad, unusable fruit. Lit. “stink fruit”!
- v. 5-6 The response of the master. He will remove his protection. He will remove his care. He will remove it's nourishment (rain)
- v. 7 The parable explained, the Vineyard = House of Israel
- Lest you think this gets us off the hook in this matter, think again!
 - The Gospel passage today tells a similar story to the leaders of the house of Israel (chief priests and pharisees)
 - Jesus says in v. 43 that “the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruits.”
 - As the church, we have been given stewardship of the vineyard, but if it has been taken away from others because of their lack of fruitfulness, what is to say that it won't be taken from us as well!
- "Fruitlessness does not merely violate the Lord's formal intention, it contradicts his heart."¹

The Fruit of Holiness

- Fruit of the Spirit - Gal 5:22-24
- One of the biggest criticisms about Christians and the Church from outsiders is that we are a bunch of hypocrites. That we say one thing and do something completely different.
 - Conservative Catholic PA Representative Tim Murphy who publicly stood against abortion but privately had an extramarital affair and encouraged his secret girlfriend to get an abortion during a pregnancy scare.
- This was the same accusation that Jesus made against the Pharisees.
- To be honest, this accusation is true of us too. As Christians we all say we are against sin, and we encourage others not to sin, and yet we are all sinners.
- It brings scandal to the church when this happens.
- We need to be transparent about the fact that we are all broken vessels, all sinners in need of a savior, all beggars trying to tell other beggars where they can find some bread.
- But we also need to live into the transformation that God calls us to.

¹ J. Alec Motyer, *Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (vol. 20; Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 70.

- This transformation doesn't happen overnight. In fact, it takes a lifetime. But our lives should start to bear the fruit of the Spirit.

The Fruit of Mission

- Parable of the Sower - Matt 13:23
- Multiplication is a basic fact of life. When you look at an ear of corn, everyone of those yellow kernels is a seed that could be put into the ground to produce more corn. And all of it, multiples ears of it, came from just one seed that was planted.
- When God places Adam and Eve on the earth, he tells them to "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Gen 1:28).
- Just as God calls humanity to bear biological children, he also calls all of us as Christians to bear spiritual children.
- Abraham was blessed by God so that he could be a blessing to all the families of the earth (Gen 12:3).
- Your salvation is not just for you, like Abraham, you were blessed to be a blessing.
- Who has God placed in your life that is in need of the Gospel of Jesus Christ?
 - Take a moment to pray quietly about this and ask God to put someone on your heart..... Now write down that name or names on your bulletin.
- Missional Habits study begins this Wednesday at 6:30.

What Keeps us from Bearing Fruit?

- Works of the flesh (sin) - Gal 5:16-17
 - When we sin it drives us further from God, and we go looking for comfort in all the wrong places. This drives us deeper into sin and further away from God.
 - Notice the contrast between the "works of the flesh" and the "fruit of the Spirit". Works are something that we do, but the fruit of the Spirit is something that God does inside us to form us into the people he desires us to be.
 - We need to do this "walking by the Spirit."
- Fear - Timothy
 - Timothy was very young when he was ordained. Perhaps you can picture him, full of enthusiasm, ready to change people's lives with the Gospel.
 - In 2 Timothy, we see a picture of someone different. Someone beaten down, someone who has lost his confidence.
 - 2 Tim 1:6-8
 - Fear doesn't come from the Lord! Fear comes from the enemy to keep us from being fruitful in mission.
 - God gives us power, and love, and self-control.
 - v. 8, "therefore do not be ashamed!..."

Pray and Obey

- Psalm 80:14, 17-18 - The psalmist asks God to restore his people.
- We too can pray for God's restoration in our lives and in our church.
- Then we need to obey. Growing in the fruit of the Spirit and in the fruit of mission.