

**Prayer List of the Sick and Afflicted:**

Judy Coley was in the emergency room last week with fluid on one of her lungs. She is back home and being treated with antibiotics. She will also have an echocardiogram soon to hopefully rule out any fluid being in the sack around her heart.

Floyd Coley is being treated for a sore on his leg.

Britani Baxter, Susie Burdsall's granddaughter, had back surgery and is doing well.

Dave and Tina's grandson, Hunter Cramer, is suffering from bouts of hypotension and is undergoing testing.

Dave and Tina's granddaughter, Hannah Duncan, is being evaluated for episodes of heart palpitations.

Iris Hash's son, Bobby Epeards, is under hospice care with heart issues.

Delores Hendrickson is still struggling with a bad cough and is having some vision issues caused by dry macular degeneration in her eyes.

Charlie Henard's niece, Brittany Henard, is battling terminal cancer.

Karen Sproles is still dealing with pain in her knee. She got good results with testing performed regarding her kidneys.

Jean England, daughter of Karen Sproles, is still having stomach issues associated with stress.

John Richardson is battling with bloating and stomach issues.

**Pray For Our Shut-Ins:**

Gloria Hale, Karen Sproles, Iris Hash, John & Terry Richardson

**Pray For The Mission Works We Are Supporting:**

John Grubb (Mission work in Asia), Daniel Goshorn and family (Mission work in Peru). See latest mission reports on the bulletin board in the back of the auditorium.

**Benevolent Opportunity:**

For the month of November, we will be collecting non-refrigerated breakfast foods for the MSD of Martinsville food pantry. This includes items such as oatmeal, dry cereals, breakfast bars, canned items, etc.

**Men's Business Meeting:**

The next men's business meeting will be Wednesday, December 4th at 5:00 PM.

**Monthly Pitch-in Dinner:**

Our next pitch-in dinner will be Sunday, December 8, following the AM services. Following the pitch-in, at 1:00 PM, we will have a service in song. Note that this was moved from the typical first Sunday of the month to December 8<sup>th</sup> due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

**Radio Program:**

Please remember to tune in every Sunday morning at 8:00 AM to WCBK 102.3 FM to hear our radio program which is entitled: "Preparing For Eternity".

**God's Plan For Our Salvation**

Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).

Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).

Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).

Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).

Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).

Faithful Christian Living, after the above five steps (I Peter 2:11, 12; Rev. 2:10).

December 1, 2024

***MORGAN STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST***

**540 E. Morgan Street  
Martinsville, IN 46151  
(765) 342-6027**



**Schedule of Services:**

**Sunday**

Bible Study – 9:30 AM

Worship – 10:30 AM

Evening Service - 6:00

**Wednesday**

Bible Study – 6:00 PM

**Thursday**

Ladies' Bible Study – 11:00 AM (March through October)

**Radio Program:**

"Preparing For Eternity"

Sunday Mornings 8:00 AM, WCBK 102.3 FM

**Website:**

[www.morganstreetchurchofchrist.org](http://www.morganstreetchurchofchrist.org)

Gospel Preacher – Bob Hawkins

## BEING FRUITFUL IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

Roger D. Campbell

Trees bear fruit. So do vines. In the spiritual realm, the Bible teaches there is a sense in which the Gospel brings forth fruit (Col. 1:5-6). Jesus spoke to His apostles about branches bearing fruit (John 15:1-8). We further read in many of the New Testament epistles that were written to individual saints or congregations of God's church, that the Holy Spirit speaks of Christians bearing fruit or being fruitful in the Lord's service. How fruitful are you? How fruitful am I in the Master's service? Let's look at some Bible principles and facts about children of God bearing fruit.

The Lord wants me to be fruitful. How does God get this point across? First, the message of John 15:1-8 makes this clear. Consider some excerpts from what Jesus said to His apostles in that setting: *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. ... Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. ... Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."*

Concerning the necessity of bearing fruit, from these verses we learn that if branches (which represent disciples of Jesus), do not bear fruit, they are cast away and eventually are burned (15:2,6). God is glorified when Jesus' disciples bear fruit (15:8). And, true disciples will bear fruit (15:8).

How else does the Lord make it known that He wants Christians to bear fruit? In contrast to "the works of the flesh," which prevent people from inheriting the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21), the Bible sets forth "the fruit of the Spirit," which includes joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Gal. 5:22,23). Indeed, this is fruit that the Lord wants each member of the church to bear or demonstrate in his/her life.

In addition, God lets us know that He expects us to bear fruit by telling us not to be unfruitful. The opposite of being unfruitful, of course, is to be fruitful. For instance, in Titus 3:14 it is written, *"And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."* Also, Christians are exhorted to add to their faith virtue, followed by knowledge, self-control, patience, godliness, brotherly love, and love (2 Peter 1:5-7). Those who do such are neither *"barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1:8). By possessing such qualities (faith, knowledge, self-control...) in our lives, and in the process avoiding being unfruitful, we will be blessed with an entrance *"into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"* (1:11). In short, this passage makes it clear that going to heaven is conditional upon our maintaining a pattern of being fruitful! Yes, the Lord wants me to be fruitful.

The Lord wants me to be fruitful in the right things. It is not enough just to bring forth fruit or to produce something. No, the Lord wants each of us to be fruitful in the right things. What might that be? Paul prayed for the saints in Philippi to be filled with "the fruits of righteousness" (Phil. 1:11). He also prayed that the Christians in Colosse would be *"fruitful in every good work"* (Col. 1:10). As we noticed earlier, being unfruitful is put in contrast to maintaining good works in Titus 3:14. So what do we see in these verses? The Lord wants us to be fruitful in the ways of righteousness or good works. That means to be participants in what the Bible portrays as proper and good activities. That would surely include those items contained in "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22-23).

The Lord wants me to be fruitful for His glory. What is it that brings glory to the Father? Jesus said, *"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit..."* (John 15:8). I should not be interested in doing things in order to bring attention to myself. My motive in bearing fruit ought not be to have others praise me. The Master said that our good works should be seen by others alright, but our goal must be for those that see our good works/fruits to glorify our heavenly Father (Matt. 5:16).

In showing the Christian's relationship to Jesus, as well as to the Law of Moses, the apostle Paul wrote, *"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God"* (Rom. 7:4). From this verse we learn that: 1) Christians are dead to the old law, that is, it is no longer binding on us; 2) We are "married to" the Christ; 3) We should bring forth fruit unto God. Again, note that the fruit is not for ourselves, but for God, Who by His mercy allows us to escape the horrors of hell, and Who by His grace allows us to enjoy all spiritual blessing in His Son and to receive the ultimate joy of everlasting life in heaven. Yes, the Lord wants me to be fruitful for His glory.

The Lord understands that His children will be fruitful at different levels. In His great Parable of the Sower, Jesus identified the good ground as representing a person that possesses *"an honest and good heart"* (Luke 8:15). Such a person hears the Gospel and receives it, then, following conversion, keeps on bearing fruit. How much fruit do such faithful fruit bearers bring forth? *"...Some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty"* (Matt. 13:23). Is the one that brings forth fruit at the 100 level "more faithful to God and of greater value in His sight than the one who brings forth at the level?" Not at all. God forbid.

Remember Jesus' Parable of the Talents (Matt. 25:14-30)? It contains a similar principle: regardless of what the Lord has placed into our hands, we should diligently use it in His service for His glory. If I am a "one-talent person," I can still be faithful and go to heaven. Yea, the Lord expects me to be faithful and bear fruit, regardless of my abilities. We are not, I repeat, we are not, in competition with other disciples of the Christ. My faithfulness to God has nothing to do with what others can or cannot do in His service. I am responsible for one thing: to bring forth fruit in my life, to bring forth the right kind of fruit, and to do it for God's glory.

The Lord wants me to work diligently to bear fruit. Recognizing there are different levels of fruit bearing ability does not mean, however, that a child of God has the right to goof off in the work of the Kingdom. In fact, our goal should be to bear much fruit. That's what Jesus expected of His apostles (John 15:8). When a branch in the Christ bears fruit, what does God do with such a branch? He purges or prunes it so it will *"bring forth more fruit"* (John 15:3). From these statements of the Master, I cannot get around two facts: 1) My Lord wants me to bear "much fruit," and, 2) He wants me to keep on growing spiritually in order that I can bring forth "more fruit." While the masses of this world set their sights on storing up material treasures and enjoying the pleasures of life on earth, the faithful child of God focuses his attention on a personal matter that he knows is the difference between eternal joy and eternal perdition. God's faithful child strives to be counted by God as an "M & M" man: one that seeks to bring forth "much" fruit and "more" fruit—doing it all for the Lord's glory.

Some who read this may be confused. They may have anticipated that I would come "right out of the gate" talking about evangelism and teaching the Gospel to lost people as the way that God wants us to bear fruit, and yet, to this point I have not even mentioned such a concept. The truth is, in the great majority of cases where the concept of bearing fruit is noted in the New Testament, the context is not speaking about teaching others the Gospel in order to bring forth the fruit of saved souls.

Jesus did say, *"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest"* (Matt. 9:38). This is talking about a harvest of souls, and so in this case there would be a need for disciples to "reap" the harvest. In another instance, just before a number of Samaritans came forth and believed on Jesus, He told His apostles, *"Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Life up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together"* (John 4:35-36). Again, in this case, Jesus speaks of the role that His followers play in sowing and reaping. This refers to the saving of souls and it involves the need for His servants to teach the Gospel.

Yet in the New Testament, being "fruitful" normally has reference to a Christian being faithful to Him and demonstrating in his/her life those qualities that God seeks to see in a person. That would be "the fruit of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22,23), "the fruits of righteousness" (Phil. 1:11), those qualities listed in 2 Peter 1:5-7, and similar matters.

Jesus said that trees are known by their fruits (Matt. 7:16-20). What kind of "tree" are you and I showing to the world by the lives we live? Let each of us make the commitment to do our best to be fruitful in the Master's service. *"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life"* (Prov. 11:30).