

THE ROOT OF THE FRUIT

“What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe – as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow.” —1 CORINTHIANS 3:5-6

Every stage of the process that leads to mature fruit can be seen on Aaron’s staff. Some parts were just beginning to sprout, some formed into buds, others were in full blossom, and others ripened into almonds.

The fact that God has called us will ultimately be expressed in fruit. We can be confident of this even when the fruit is not as fully evident as we would like to see. “I planted the seed, Apollos watered it,” Paul says. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose – to produce fruit. In whatever God has called us to do, we can rest assured there will be fruit that will please Him.

We should not, however, be unduly elated by visible evidence of God’s fruit, nor be unduly discouraged by lack of evidence that relates directly to our obedience to God. It is not the apparent fruit that is of prime concern, but the root from which the fruit derives. If the root is right and we are living in dependence on Christ, then the fruit will look after itself, whether it seems visible or not. We should not measure the value or significance of our work by its apparent results, but by its cause.

If God has placed us in a specific role, then we can afford to go forty years like Jeremiah, and not see any tangible evidence of success. But like Jeremiah, it is not how people respond to what we say, but the origin of what we say that is important. When Jeremiah complained to God that he did not know what to say, he tells us, “The Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, ‘I have put my words in your mouth’” (Jeremiah 1:9). Then Jeremiah knew that people did not have to respond in order for him to know he had followed God’s calling. In fact, the people did not respond and Jeremiah became discouraged and even died discouraged. Yet today we are still benefiting from God’s words spoken through Jeremiah. This is the fruit, and Jeremiah could be sure of it, not in measuring the immediate results of his ministry, but in the cause from which the ministry sprang.

Though we may not see the end result of our calling, we can be sure that we are links in a chain of events that will bear fruit for God. The planting, watering, nurturing and harvesting may take many different hands over lengthy periods of time, but at some point, the seed will sprout in the heart of a believer when it is sown in the roots of God.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, help me to always stay rooted in You, and be the means by which the seed I sow, water or nurture will bear fruit. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I become concerned or discouraged when I am not seeing results in my witness for Christ?