

CHECK YOUR TREE

Devotional #8



Bishop Talmadge J. Thomas, Lead Pastor
City of Zion, the Mt. Zion Church

Sermon Series: We Grow, We Mature, We Produce!
Sermon Subject: "Check Your Tree"

Foundational Scriptures:

Galatians 5:22-23 ESV

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

Ephesians 5:17-21 ESV

¹⁷ Therefore do not be foolish but understand what the will of the Lord is. ¹⁸ And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹ addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰ giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

2 Peter 3:18 ESV

¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

Matthew 7:15-20 ESV

¹⁵ "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ So, every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus you will recognize them by their fruits.

Helpful Hints to manage this devotional:

- Set aside 1 hour each day for time with God and his word.
- **Suggestion:** 30 minutes, possibly in the morning, 30 minutes in the evening.
- Read and write daily at your pace so that by the weekend, you have completed the week's devotional. The design is that you don't have to find a starting point to study; just do it. Get an accountability partner to read and study the devotional.

"Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe." **Saint Augustine**

Relevant question: Would you rather be famous or faithful?

The answer to the question may be found in whose eyes matter the most: yours, others or God's. We continue the journey through the "fruit of the Spirit," and today's focus is Faithfulness.

Mark 11:22 ESV

²² And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God.

Foundational point: The spirit-filled life is marked by two things

1. faith
2. faithfulness

Mother Teresa said, " I do not pray for success; I ask for Faithfulness."

When it comes to being good fruit inspectors, what is on someone else's tree matters more than what is on our own.

What is on your tree?

Of all the things to possess as a child of God, faith and Faithfulness should be evident and abundant on the believer's tree.

Matthew 12:33 ESV

³³ "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit.

A. Faith

Hebrews 11:1 ESV

11 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Spirit-filled people trust God. Period!

Faith is knowing GOD cares, believing God can, and trusting God's will.

Your circumstances do not dictate your faith response; your faith response speaks to your circumstances.

We must have faith in Jesus Christ's atoning work in order to accept the gift of salvation.

Ephesians 2:8 ESV

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,...

Faith is evidence of **MATURITY!**

2 Corinthians 5:7 ESV

⁷ for we walk by faith, not by sight.

Faith does not need explanations from God; it needs execution from us.

Matthew 17:20 ESV

Faith isn't believing **IN** God; faith is believing God!

Faith is not believing **IN** God; faith is believing in God!

When you exercise faith, you learn and know some things about God.

Romans 8:28 ESV

²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good,^[a] for those who are called according to his purpose.

Without faith, you cannot please God, no matter how you please God."

B. Faithfulness

Spirit-filled people trust God, and God can trust them!

Relevant questions: What have you done with the trust God has given you so far?

Explain here: _____

Trusting God is not a one-day, 90-minute exercise but a lifetime.
Do you want more from God than you are currently giving? Time?
Attending church and not giving the church any of your time is not enough.
Religion without sacrifice is a waste of time!
"I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing!"

Luke 9:23 ESV

²³ And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

Deitrich Bonhoeffer: "When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."
What Does God Expect?

Luke 10:27 ESV

²⁷ And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

Write what this verse says to you: _____

We are not called to be famous. We are called to be faithful.

Relevant question: What are the three things you are faithful to?

Proverbs 28:20 ESV

²⁰ A faithful man will abound with blessings, but whoever hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.

Devotional Discussion Questions.....

1. What is faith?
2. Is faith essential to salvation?
3. Is faith connected to growth and maturity? How?
4. Are faith and Faithfulness the same?
5. What sacrifices are you making for God?

Monday

Read: Lamentations 3:22-24

2 Thessalonians 3:3

"The glory of God's faithfulness is that no sin of ours has ever made Him unfaithful." Charles Spurgeon

Thank God for His Faithfulness toward you.

Tuesday

Read: Psalm 37:28

1 John 1:9

"To soar what is possible, you must leave behind what is comfortable." Cicely Tyson

How can you be more faithful to God?

Wednesday

Read: Matthew 21:22

Ephesians 3:20

Hebrews 11:1

"To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary.

To one without faith, no explanation is possible." Thomas Aquinas

What are you trusting God for?

Thursday

Read: Proverbs 3:5-6

2 Corinthians 5:7

Hebrews 11:6

"No man knows what he can do until he tries." Carter G. Woodson

What is the current status of your faith?

Friday

Read: Matthew 28:18-20

1 Peter 3:15

"Jesus is not one of many ways to approach God, nor is He the best of several ways; He is the only way." A.W. Tozer

Who can you share your faith with today?