

FRUITFUL – Week 4: Good Fruit in Your Words

SERIES OVERVIEW/MESSAGE SETUP:

WE'RE in WEEK FOUR of our SERIES: FRUITFUL

Review:

Fruit of the Spirit: God expects this fruit to be growing in us. **[FRUIT TREE IMAGE]**.

We have the choice to follow the flesh which leads to bad fruit or yield to the Spirit which leads to good fruit.

One of the first places we find out how we're doing...our words.

How important are our words?

Does God care about my words?

Proverbs 18:21 (NIV)

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.

The Bible says our words carry life and death.

People who love God with their words...they eat the fruit of that life.

Significance of Words in the Bible

- God spoke the universe into existence. (Genesis 1:3)
- In the beginning was the Word. (John 1:1)
- Jesus said man doesn't live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the Father. (Matthew 4:4)
- Jesus is the Word made flesh...who came and lived among us. (John 1:14)
- Our tongues are small, but they can set a forest on fire. (James 3:5)

Turn with me in your Bibles to Matthew 12.

PASSAGE:

- Jesus is healing people and large crowds are following Him
- He heals a man who was blind and mute – the Pharisees claim He's doing this because He's working with the demons
- A house divided against itself can't stand – for me or against me.

Matthew 12:33-37 (NIV)

33 "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.

What kind of person is this? FRUIT (words, actions, behaviors, and attitude)

34 You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good?

Jesus comes in hot! In case you're wondering...this is important.

Brood of vipers => ancient belief vipers ate their way out – shameful

Children of the snake...connecting them back to the Garden

For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

Our mouths and our hearts are connected – what fills one ends up in the other

- If you want to know where someone is at...listen!

- Whatever's in there is going to come out.

35 A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil

man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.

- When someone tells you who they are...believe them!

36 But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken.

- Wow...no one's getting away with anything. We'll give an account.

37 For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

We'll play the tape – not what someone else said about you – what you said!

Jesus is saying, "I've got receipts."

It's not based on willpower or trying harder.

If you're close to Jesus, you'll talk like Jesus.

WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT?

Complicated process – it's a mystery...here's a simple way to think about it:

- 1) THOUGHTS
- 2) EMOTIONS
- 3) INTERNAL FILTERS
- 4) OUTSIDE INFLUENCES

APPLICATION:

Three Questions to Help Us Grow Good Fruit with Our Words

1) What's the pattern of my words?

Not what you meant...not what you think you said...what you actually said.

What if someone gave you last week's transcript?

Illustration: a few rotten berries can spoil the whole bunch.

Reference Proverbs 26:18-19 – Like a maniac firing flaming arrows of death is one who deceives their neighbor and says, "I was only joking!"

Proverbs 12:18 (NIV)

The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Good fruit starts with being more intentional and less reckless.

2) What do I need to stop saying?

Ephesians 4:29 (NIV)

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

We don't control whether the other person listens...but WE choose our words.

STOP SAYING:

- Reckless words

- Words that tear down
- Words that injure
- Words that assign motive
- Words that leave no hope for growth (You never...you always...)

3) What do I need to start saying?

START SAYING:

- Life-giving words
- Words that build up
- Words that heal
- Words that affirm the other person's experience
- Words filled with hope and faith

Proverbs 16:24 (NIV)

Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

CLOSE:

Encourage them to take a moment to think about the words they speak to others this week—especially those closest to them.