

FRUITFUL – Week 5: Good Fruit in Action

SERIES OVERVIEW/MESSAGE SETUP:

WE'RE in WEEK FIVE of our SERIES: FRUITFUL

I want you to know there's potential fruit for you to bear.

So why does it seem so hard?

I have all this POTENTIAL – but I'm not getting there.

Everything seems to be working right...weather is good, soil is good.

So why isn't there fruit?

Common Thoughts:

- "I thought there would be more or better fruit."
- "I'm disappointed."
- "Things look good on the outside, but they aren't actually good."

We all have a disdain for this: All leaves, no fruit.

So how do we realize our potential and bear the fruit Jesus has for us? Let's look at this passage in Mark 11.

PASSAGE:

- He's been to the temple and inspected it...and wasn't pleased.
- The next day He's walking with His disciples into Jerusalem.
- When the Bible repeats itself, it's emphasizing something

Mark 11:12-14 (NIV) 12 The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13 Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs.

It wasn't time yet for edible fruit – but there should have been BUDS. No buds by then = NO FRUIT all year

14 Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.

Mark 11:20-21 (NIV) 20 In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. 21 Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!"

KEY INSIGHTS FROM THIS PASSAGE:

3 times the Bible describes Israel as a fig tree with no fruit. (Jeremiah 8, Micah 7, Isaiah 34) 2 “MARKAN SANDWICH” – Mark tells us about the fig tree, cleansing the temple, and then back to the withered fig tree. This repetition is meant to highlight importance.

TEMPLE CLEANSING – Cursing the fig tree is connected to cleansing the temple, which would be destroyed in AD 70.

FIG LEAVES – Adam and Eve used fig leaves to cover their shame in the Garden.

We're not Jesus, fig trees, religious leaders or Israel. But the principle is the same for us.

What does this look like in our lives?

- Religion vs. Relationship
- You focus more on the way things appear than the way they really are.
- You emphasize outward piety over inward transformation.
- You major on the minors – Jesus said: “You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.”
- You make personal convictions moral absolutes.
- You're obnoxious, but call it “boldness.”
- You disregard lost people, and you don't even attempt to relate to them.

Here's how the story ends – Jesus reinforces the main things:

- Jesus tells them to have faith in God – He can move mountains.
- Jesus encourages them to pray and believe together and to forgive anyone whom they have anything against

APPLICATION:

How Does Jesus Tell Us Bear Good Fruit?

1) Stay humble and open to inspection.

Are you open? Are you teachable? Are you entreatable?

We're not defensive or surprised when He comes to correct us.

We don't receive correction as rejection – it's an expression of His love for us.

2) Stay aware of common traps.

Jesus had phrases He used to describe people like the cursed fig tree.

He finished the story by contrasting what people with good fruit looked like:

- “Hypocrites/White-washed tombs”

GOOD FRUIT: You have a genuine relationship with Jesus.

- “Brood of Vipers”

GOOD FRUIT: You’re a person of strong conviction, but you’re also thoughtful and kind toward all people.

- “Blind guides”

GOOD FRUIT: You don’t demand that other people live with convictions you can’t consistently meet.

Jesus told the Pharisees: You shut the Kingdom of heaven in people’s faces.

The Pharisees accused Jesus: You’re a friend of sinners.

CLOSE:

[Potential: tell a story from your congregation of someone who is bearing good fruit in action]

What do we want to be? The kind of people that people say “I see the fruit. I want what they have.”