

Known By Our Fruit

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[0:00] Luke chapter 6, and we're going to begin reading in verse 37 and read through verse 45.

! I ask you to stand with me for the reading of God's Word and remain standing for prayer. Roger Michaud, would you please lead us after we've read the Scriptures. Luke 6, 37.

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned.

Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

He also told them this parable. Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?

[1:21] How can you say to your brother, Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye, when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye?

You hypocrite. First take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart.

For out of the overflow of his heart, his mouth speaks. I ask you to turn with me again in your Bibles to the Gospel of Luke in the sixth chapter.

Say you're walking through an orchard. You didn't notice a sign when you came in? No one has told you what sort of orchard that you're walking through, so you don't know what sort of orchard you're in.

[2:48] What would be the easiest way to determine what sort of orchard you've stumbled upon? Perhaps some of you are astute students of trees and could look at the shapes of the leaves and the color of the bark and the size and shape and look of the tree and be able to determine.

But those of us who are less plant-inclined would probably look at what was hanging from the branches of those trees. And if you saw apples hanging from the branches, you could quickly determine that you were in an apple orchard.

If you saw oranges hanging from the branches of the trees, you would stumble upon an orange grove. Because trees are known by their fruit.

I was in Jamaica once. I was on a plantation there. And there, for the first time, saw a type of tree I had never seen before, but I immediately knew that it was a banana tree.

Because there were big clumps of bananas growing upward, as they do. You can see pictures of them. I'd never seen one before, but immediately, well, that's a banana tree.

[4:01] Our guide told us that, but we didn't need to be told. It was obvious to us. Because you can tell a tree by its fruit. It's almost too obvious as to even need stating.

And so we might wonder why Jesus even says something that's so obvious that a tree is recognized by its own fruit. But sometimes we overlook the obvious in our own lives.

It's easy when it comes to trees. But then you take it and you apply it to me. And I'll be known by my fruit. And if I'm a good person in Christ, then I'll be producing good fruit.

It should be just as obvious as that tree is a banana tree. That I am a follower of Christ by the way I live. And sometimes we need maybe an obvious illustration to help us understand a profound truth.

And so tonight we want to take a few moments to examine these words of our Savior and see that He was doing more than just offering pithy little sayings that are good for quoting and are full of

profundity.

[5:11] I'm making up words now. I think that actually is a word. But it's more than that. When the Son of God speaks, it is the Word of God.

And we must listen and learn from what He has to say. How should these words affect the way we live? Notice them again in verses 43 through 45. No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit.

Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes or grapes from briars. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart.

And the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart, his mouth speaks. We want to consider the saying of Jesus tonight.

His actual words. What He said. And then why He said it. And then why it matters to us. Or why it should matter to us that He said it. And what we can learn from it. So first of all, the saying of our Savior in these verses.

[6:15] What were His words? They're, again, rather obvious. No good tree bears bad fruit. No bad tree bears good fruit. If you're back in your orchard and you see a bunch of trees that are dead and dying and rotting and decaying, that's probably not going to be your first choice of a place to pick fruit.

Because bad trees don't produce the kind of fruit you want to eat or take home and make into something else that you eat. It just doesn't happen that way. And the word for bad here isn't just bad.

It's rotting. Rotten. The fruit on these dying trees is also rotting, decaying, mushy, worm-eaten.

We're not talking about just maybe a dead branch on one of the trees or one wilted leaf here or one piece of fruit that's got a little bruise on it.

This is rotten. Rotting trees. And the fruit that it produces is also rotten and rotting. But on the other hand, if you're in an orchard with trees that are vibrant and healthy, you'll be more likely to pick fruit there.

The trees are watered. They are well fed. The fruit that is growing on them is beautiful. It's firm. It's ripe. It's unblemished. Untouched by worms. It's pleasing to the eye and profitable for eating and for your health.

[7:39] That's simply how it is. Good trees don't produce bad fruit. Bad trees don't produce good fruit. This is the first of two fruit illustrations that our Savior gives us in this passage.

The second illustration is that a tree is recognized by its fruit. If you want fruit, don't go to a briar bush. Don't go to a thorn bush and look for figs or grapes because you're not going to find them. Where I used to live in South Carolina, along the back of the property, there was a line of trees and bushes. And it was a great place to play as a kid.

Trees that were climbable and bushes that sort of arced and you could crawl underneath them and play army men and whatever else you wanted to play. But protruding from that bunch of bushes was one bush in particular that was a thorn bush.

And it was not a pleasant thing to have to crawl and reach and hope your way into that bush when it consumed yet another baseball or some other ball or some other toy, which frequently happened in our backyard.

[8:43] And just for the record, I never saw a fig growing on that thorn bush. Never saw any grapes there. Never saw any kind of fruit growing on that bush.

But also in that row, farther down, if you're looking at it, farther down to the right was a great big pecan tree. Do you all say pecan, pecan, or are you pecan people? Okay.

Well, I say pecan, so I'm going to say pecan. It's a great big pecan tree. It was great because we never had to buy pecans for baking or eating. And I can still see my dad up in that tree, his feet firmly planted in the crooks of two branches and his arms on two others, shaking that tree and it would just rain down pecans.

And you know what? It never rained down walnuts. It never rained down apples. It never rained down thorns. It only rained down pecans because it was a pecan tree. And it produced pecans. If my mom had sent me out to collect some pecans, she would have thought I was an idiot if I was crawling around in a thorn bush looking for them. And she probably would have thought it was a miracle if I'd come back with apples.

[9:52] Because pecan trees produce pecans and thorn bushes produce thorns. That's how it is. Again, it's obvious. We know that.

But sometimes we need to hear the obvious. And Jesus is talking about much more than trees and fruit. He's talking about people.

And he goes on to tell us that. A person with a good heart will do good. A person with a bad heart will do bad. An evil heart will do evil.

The good man will bring forth good things out of the good treasure that is in his heart. Just like the three wise men out of their treasure brought forth gold and frankincense and myrrh to give as an offering to Jesus.

The good man will bring forth out of the treasure of his heart good things. Do you see a man whose conduct is pure and right?

[10:54] It's coming from a heart that is pure and right. And it's a good man. Because you can tell by his actions. Are his actions toward others kind and gentle? It's coming from a kind and gentle heart.

And that is the sort of person he is. Because those things don't come out of an evil heart. If his demeanor is one of humility and gentleness, then you will find his heart is so.

And so is the man. Because that's who he is. That's the sort of fruit that is produced in his life. And what better place to illustrate it than in the life of the very one who utters these words.

Our Lord. The only one who is ever on himself good and pure in heart. Any goodness in our hearts comes because God puts it there.

But here is God himself walking on the earth. And his heart is good. And what do we see from the Savior? Do we see wickedness coming out of a good heart? Well, of course not.

[11:52] Never once does our Savior do something that's evil. Flowing from his tongue our wisdom and truth. Out of the overflow of wisdom and truth in his heart. He shows kindness and mercy to the sick.

The demon possessed. The dying. The poor. The crippled. The blind. The deaf. The dumb. The otherwise disabled. Out of the kindness and mercy that welled up within his own heart.

We see him acting in kindness and mercy. He does good. He is good. And so he does good. If you looked at Jesus, there was no mistaking.

It was as obvious to you as a banana tree as a banana tree. That this was a good man. Because of the way he lived. The things he did. The things that he said.

You could see it in his action and hear it in his speech. And it's something that he expects of his followers as well. When he tells the parable of the soils. Or the sower who goes out to sow.

[12:47] He says in Matthew 13, 23. But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil. Is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop.

That's the verb form of our word fruit. He bears fruit. Yielding a hundred, sixty, or thirty times what was sown. And when he talked about himself in John 15 as divine.

And we being the branches. He says, I am the vine. You are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him. He will bear much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing.

And so Jesus expects that those who have been given a new heart by the Holy Spirit. Those who are followers of Christ. Will produce fruit. And people will be able to look at you and say.

That's a follower of Christ. I can tell by the things that he's doing. Because a follower of Christ doesn't do the things that are evil. A follower of Christ does what is good. Flowing out of the good that is in his heart.

[13:44] It should be unmistakable. Just like looking at a tree. You can tell what sort of tree it is by its fruit. You should be able to tell. That followers of Christ are such by their fruit.

Because a good man will bring out of the treasure of good in his heart. What is good. But on the flip side. The evil man produces evil out of his evil heart.

Matthew 15 verses 18 and 19. Again the words of our Lord. But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart. And these make a man unclean.

For out of the heart come evil thoughts. Murder. Adultery. Sexual immorality. Theft. False testimony. And slander. That's what's in the heart of a wicked man. And so you're not surprised when you see someone living that way.

In all of these ways. Those things coming out of their mouths. Murder. Adultery. Sexual immorality. And so on. You expect that from someone who's evil.

[14:42] Because an evil person will do what is evil. It might be a period of time when it appears that they're doing some good. And you see that in the parable of the soils again. Matthew 13 verse 23.

But eventually it will be proven. What's in their heart. The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns. As the man who hears the word. But the worries of this life. And the deceitfulness of wealth. Choke it. Making it unfruitful. It's producing no good fruit. Only bad fruit. That's what you expect of an evil man.

Think for example of Judas. He was a man who showed some good signs. But when pressed. What was in his heart came out. He's skimming off the top of what should be given to the poor. For himself. Because he loves money. He's willing to betray his Lord. For money. And we see his true heart shows in his actions.

[15:37] You could tell he was a thorn bush. Because there was no good fruit to be had. No genuine fruit to be had. And Jesus doesn't say this here in the passage in Luke.

But elsewhere we read what happens to such trees. That produce bad fruit. Or no fruit at all. Matthew 3 and verse 10. The axe is already at the root of the trees.

And every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down. And thrown into the fire. The wicked man. The evil.

Who has evil in his heart. And is doing evil. Will be cut down. And thrown into the fires of hell forever. The scriptures tell us.

And you can look around. And you know who those people are. By the way they live. It shows. Just like bad rotten fruit shows on a bad rotten tree.

[16:33] And then Jesus sums it up. By saying. For out of the overflow of his heart. His mouth speaks. Again. What's in your heart. Is going to come out. In your actions. And it will come out.

In your words. As well. What do people hear? When you open your mouth. What they hear. Is evidence of what is in your heart. And you can fake it.

And you can put on a good show. But in your moments. When you're honest. And when you're reflecting. What's in your heart. It's clear to all what you are. A good man. Or an evil man.

And so we are. To be listening. To the words of Jesus. Sobering words. Maybe a little bit obvious. When you first read them. Okay. Fruit. I get it. But sobering and searching words.

When you begin to think about them. With respect to yourself. They must not. They cannot be ignored tonight. If you are. Professing faith in Christ tonight. He is your Lord. And so you must listen to what he says.

[17:30] So hear these words. And if you are not professing faith in Christ. You must hear these words anyway. Here you sit. You have the privilege of hearing. The word of God.

The words from the lips of the Savior himself. And he's giving you a warning tonight. And so hear it. Because whoever does not produce fruit. Good fruit will be cut off.

And thrown into the fire. Why is Jesus saying these things? Why these words? Why at this time? In the parallel passage. In Matthew. Jesus is talking about the danger of false teachers.

Wolves in sheep's clothing. And though they may try to deceive you. You'll be able to discern.

Whether they're a true or a false teacher. By the things that they say.

That was a test for a prophet. In the Old Testament. If what he says comes to pass. He is a prophet. If it doesn't. He is not a prophet. And similarly. You can put to test. The words that you hear people speak.

[18:26] Are they true? Do they line up with what God's word says? Or do they not? And Jesus is coming and saying. There are false teachers. Beware of such.

It was crucial in that day. As it is in ours. Some were denying that Jesus was the Messiah. And people needed to discern. Whether or not that was the truth.

Of course it wasn't. But people were believing it anyway. So he says. Don't listen to such false teachers. Some like the Pharisees. Were advocating. A way of being right with God. That was totally based on.

Their keeping of the law. And that is not true. And it's not right. And people listening to such teaching. Needed to be discerning. And then Jesus is teaching. That he is the Messiah.

That he is the fulfillment. Of the Old Testament prophecies. And so. Look closely. Says Jesus. Judge them by their words. Examine them by their fruit. All those Pharisees.

[19 : 20] They look like they're producing. All kinds of good fruit. But are they? Look closer. You'll see they're more concerned with their own opinions. Their own man-made laws. Than the opinion and the law of God.

You'll see their fruit actually bears the rotten marks of self-righteousness and pride. You'll know them by their fruit. So it would have been helpful for those listening to determine who they should be following.

Jesus? The Pharisee? Someone else that's denying Jesus is the Messiah? They need some discernment. And so whatever Jesus is saying when he says, do not judge and you will not be judged. He's not saying, don't be discerning.

He's not saying, don't evaluate the things that you hear. And the people that you see. Because then, right after that, he gives a standard for evaluating them. For judging them. And so, we must be careful to evaluate a person's character and life.

Jesus' words would have been for his disciples to examine themselves to see if they were speaking and living the truth. You disciples. If you're really disciples of mine, there better be fruit to show for it.

[20 : 28] And so you better take a look at the log that's in your own eye before you go checking everybody else out. And so he includes that instruction here as well. Before you go cutting everyone down.

Got some issues to deal with. There's a beam in your own eye that needs to be dealt with. These words are to examine ourselves. Not just others around us.

It would have been good for the Pharisees to look at themselves and see that there was only rotten fruit. To see that they need a good heart. A changed heart. And Jesus said it for us.

He knew his words would not only be heard by those standing around him at that moment, but that they would be recorded for generations to come. And here we are, 2,000 plus years later, listening to the words of our Savior.

And so these words are for us tonight. And so what is their significance for us? What does it mean for us? We've seen Jesus' words, why he spoke them.

[21 : 33] Why is it important for you tonight? Why is it important for me tonight? And again, this might be obvious, but let's dig into it a little bit.

The way you live reveals what's in your heart. What you do shows who you are.

And so the question for you is, how do other people see you? Do they automatically say, there's a Christian? There is a good man.

There is a good woman. A good boy. A good girl. I can tell by the way that he or she lives. If you're a Christian, God has given you a new heart.

And you will be doing those things that are good and right. A Christian will be, by God's grace, a good person. And so, what characterizes the way that you live?

[22 : 33] Is it obvious to the world around you that you are not like the world? That you are a Christian? I'm telling you, if you see a banana tree, I know I keep coming back to the bananas.

But if you see a banana tree, you can't miss it. It's a banana tree. There's no pretending like it's something else. You can't dress it up like anything else. You can't deny it.

But it's clearly a banana tree. There's nothing else like it in the world. It should be that unmistakably obvious to everyone around you that you are a good person by the fruit that you are producing.

That you are a follower of Christ. What are some things that will make it obvious? We're going to talk about three things that should make it clear tonight. These are a bit arbitrary and they're very broad categories.

But first of all, your relationship to the Lord and to His people should make it obvious to others. Your behavior, and there's an extremely broad category, should make it obvious to others.

[23 : 33] And we're going to talk about our reactions making it obvious to others. First of all, your relationship to the Lord and His people. One of the first things people might notice about a Christian is their faithful attendance at church services.

Now that doesn't make you a good person. That doesn't make you a Christian. But if you are a Christian, if you are a faithful follower of Christ, then you will be in faithful attendance when His people gather together.

You'll join yourself to a body of believers and associate yourself with them and be there when they meet. That will be obvious. It will be clear to other people. And so the question is, is the Lord's

house on His day a central part of your life?

Do all other things pale in significance to this? Is your calendar scheduled with this day guarded and kept from other things that would intrude because your relationship with your God is the most important thing in your life?

And so hearing from your God, worshiping Him is the most important thing in your life, which makes this the most important day of the week, each week in your life.

[24 : 48] Does your schedule reflect that? Do other things in your busy schedule give way to meeting with God's people in His house on His day? Or is meeting with God's people in His house on His day the thing that gets pushed aside so that other things can take its place in your schedule?

More important things. That will be an indicator of your relationship with God, which is a mark of the fruit in your life. Something that people will be able to look at and say, that person is obviously devoted to their God.

Every time the doors of the church open, they're there. Worshiping, hearing from their God. Now this is not enough. Don't misunderstand. There are many faithful church attenders who are not producing good fruit in their lives.

But this is one thing that will mark a follower of Christ. Your daily walk with Christ will be another indicator. Now there may not be much opportunity for others to observe this, to see this particular fruit.

Your personal devotions are personal. Your private worship is private. But has anyone in your own home ever stumbled in on you reading your Bible? Has they ever interrupted you while you're praying and seen you pouring your heart out to your God?

[26 : 02] Well, I get up before everybody else in the house does. And so they don't have a chance to see it because they're asleep. Okay, that's fine. Do they ever see you leading your family in worship? Is your family ever doing those things?

These things will be indicators of the importance of your relationship with God. You making beautiful to those around you the God that you supposedly love so much.

Your relationship to God will be one of the fruits of a follower of Christ. It will be evident to all. In your church attendance. In your personal devotions.

In your leading your family in worship. And in your relationship with God's people. Who do you love to be with? What's one of John's tests in 1 John? The love test.

Do you love the brethren? Do you love to be with them? That will show. And where your priorities lie. Who you spend your time with. Where you love to be. Who you love to be with.

[27 : 03] Is it with the people of God or the people of the world? A follower of Christ will love to be with other followers of Christ. And that will show. And you'll be able to look at somebody and say, Man, he is always with his friends from church.

He is always with those people. We must love those people. That's different. I've never seen anything quite like that before. That's an obvious fruit that people should be able to see. If you're a fruitful tree, it will show.

In your walk with Christ, your relationship with Him and with His other followers. It will also show in your behavior. The things that you do. Your attitudes.

The things that you say. We could sum up with what Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit. Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness. Goodness.

Faithfulness. Gentleness. And self-control. We've just come through an entire adult Sunday school class for several months on this. I'm not going to rehash all of that here. But if you are a follower of Christ, if you are a good person, if you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in your heart, enabling you to do that which is right and good, then love and patience and kindness should be as obvious on you as apples are on an apple tree.

[28 : 16] Do people know you as a patient person? It will characterize those who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It will. Because it's a fruit of the Spirit. And so does it characterize you?

Do the fruit of the Spirit mark the fruit of the Spirit? The fruit, singular, of the Spirit, singular, characterize you? Does it mark you out? It will.

If you are a follower, people will be able to see it clearly. Just as clearly as there was a pecan tree in my backyard.

And I knew it because it produced pecans. It will be clear to people that there is a Christian in their backyard, in their school, in your place of employment. Because there are the fruit of the Spirit

growing on you.

Coming out of your heart that is indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Paul says to the Ephesians in Ephesians 5 and verse 9, For the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.

[29 : 21] Are you known for your goodness, your righteousness, your keeping of the law of God? You worship God and Him only. In the way that He says.

Honoring His name. Honoring His day. Honoring the people He's put in authority over you. Not hating. Not murdering. Not lusting after the opposite sex in your heart.

Not stealing. Not lying. Not coveting. Do these things mark you out? Do they characterize you?

Because the fruit of the light, Paul says, is righteousness. The keeping of God's commands.

The fruit of the light is truthfulness. Are you known for your truthfulness in what you say? What you write on your exams? What you write on your tax returns? The way you do business? The way you deal with your children?

Are you truthful? For the fruit of the light, those who are in Christ, is truthfulness. These things will be seen in the follower of Christ. Because you know a tree by its fruit.

[30 : 19] You know a Christian by their fruit. If God has changed your heart, then out of that good heart, these things will be coming. It's not optional.

He doesn't say, you might bring out of the good treasure in your heart things that are good. A good man will. Are these things seen in you?

There will be fruit seen in your reactions as well. Your response to trouble, hardship, provocation will mark you out as a faithful servant.

People will see you in the midst of the deepest trial and trouble and will marvel at your peace. At your lack of anxiety. At your lack of worry because of your confidence in your Savior who has never yet left you and has promised never to do it again.

And it will be obvious to others that there is something different about the way this person endures adversity. It will be plain and clear. They will see you in the midst of great loss and poverty and marvel at your contentment.

[31 : 27] They will see you being provoked and be amazed at your soft answer that turns away wrath. Because these things will characterize the follower of Christ.

It will be plain. And so if you claim to be a Christian tonight, by God's grace, a good person. Not claiming any goodness in and of yourself.

Understand? But because of the Spirit dwelling in you, producing this fruit. If that is your claim tonight, then hear the words of our Savior again. Excuse me.

If you're claiming that and there's no fruit to show. You look at yourself and say, those things aren't really obvious in my life. They're not there at all. This is what Jesus says again from John 15.

I am the true vine. And my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers.

[32 : 26] Such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire, and burned. It's a strong warning for those who would make a profession of faith in Christ and yet show no fruit.

That they are not followers of Christ at all. Are you known by your fruit is unmistakably belonging to Christ? Is it obvious to those around you?

A tree is known by its fruit. Are you known by your fruit? But then there's the flip side. Maybe you're working very hard to blend in and be like everyone else so that no one can tell who you are.

But if you're not a Christian, it will show in the things that you do. You can't hide it. It will be seen in the way you live.

It doesn't matter what you say you are. What you truly are shows in the way you live. If you're showing by your life that you're no different from the rest of the world, then you aren't.

[33 : 33] Remember, a bad tree can't produce good fruit. And a good tree can't produce bad fruit. And so you can't say, well, I am a good tree. I'm a good person, but I'm just not living that way right now.

No. A good tree can't produce bad fruit. That's not how it works, says Jesus. People can see the rotting, stinking fruit of sin in your life.

It will show in the same ways that good fruit shows in the lives of others. It will show in your relationship to God and to His people. There isn't one. A relationship with God.

Maybe you come to church, but it's just a show. Or you want others to think well of you. Or you come because your parents make you. When you're at home, you never pick your Bible up. You

never pray. Except maybe when you're in a tight spot.

Then maybe a prayer. But there's not a pursuit of a relationship with Christ. You don't love to be with His people. Given the choice of being with God's people or with your friends from the world.

[34 : 37] Friends from the world win hands down. It's not even a contest for you. That's a fruit that there's evil in your heart. And it's producing evil in your life.

Instead of the fruit of the Spirit, there are the works of the flesh. There is sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like.

Those things mark you. It's not coming from a good heart. It's not coming from a good person. A heart that's been changed by the work of the Spirit. It's coming from a bad tree.

Bad heart. That bad fruit. Your behavior is indistinguishable from your friends or your co-workers.

You talk like they do. You laugh at the same dirty things they laugh at.

You dress the same way they do. You watch and listen to the same things they do. You spend your time with them. Again, not the people of God. You look like a thorn bush. You look like a tree with rotten fruit.

[35 : 48] And if that's what you look like, then that's what it is. That's what you are. Says Jesus.

Jesus. Jesus. Your weekly trips to church can't cover who you really are.

Your reactions to other people, you're always complaining or to things. You're always complaining because you don't have enough. Trial, tragedy bring you to utter hopelessness and despair because you don't have any confidence in Christ.

You're full of anger when you're provoked. If you're living this way, please don't deceive yourself.

Please don't say, I really am a good person. I'm not living it right now. I'll get back on track at some point.

Or I'll get on track in the first place down the road. I'll eventually switch over from being a bad tree to a good tree. Don't deceive yourself into thinking that you can be a good tree and do these bad things.

Parents, don't condone your children and say, oh, they're just being kids. They're just growing up.

It's part of maturing and growing up. These things are wicked fruit that comes from a wicked heart.

[36 : 48] I heed the warning of J.C. Ryle as he comments on this passage. Let us not give way to the vulgar notion that although men are living wickedly, they've got good hearts at the bottom.

Such notions are flatly contradictory to our Lord's teaching. Is the general tone of a man's communication carnal, worldly, irreligious, godless, or profane?

Then let us understand that this is the state of his heart. There is no evading the doctrine laid down by our Lord in this passage. Conduct is the grand test of character.

What you do is what you are. And if you are doing the works of the flesh, then you are lost.

I'm too young. It's too early for me to be producing fruit, good or bad. I don't have to make that decision yet. Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is good and right.

[37 : 50] And so let us each take a look at ourselves tonight. Let's not be looking at specks in other people's eyes. And say, oh, I hope so and so is listening.

Because there's not much fruit over there. Let's take a look at number one. And see what sort of fruit is there. And let's get logs out of our eyes.

And then maybe we can be of help and blessing to our brothers and sisters in Christ. But let's get rid of the logs in our own eyes and see if we are producing fruit. You all understand that this side of glory, we will not be able to produce good fruit perfectly.

All illustrations break down at some point. There will be bad fruit occasionally. But it must be dealt with. It must be cut off immediately. It cannot be condoned, indulged.

You don't know which sin will be the one that leads you down the road to apostasy. And so look at the fruit in your life. Is it good fruit or is it bad fruit?

[38 : 56] What's the predominant fruit that you see in your life? You know that a good heart only comes from God. And so if you're looking at yourself wondering how in the world there's hope for you, that's good.

I'm a bad tree. So how can I produce good fruit? Well, you need a heart transplant. If what you do flows out of your heart, you need the Holy Spirit to come and take away your old heart and give you a new one.

You pray that God will do that and He will. And He'll give you a spirit to live in you. That you might begin producing the fruit of the Spirit by His grace. If you truly cry out to Him, believing in His Son, Jesus, He'll change your heart and that fruit production will begin.

You flee from the wrath to come. The axe is laid at the root of the tree. If you don't flee, you're going to be cut down and thrown into the fire and face judgment for all of eternity. But God can set you right in Christ.

And that axe will be taken away. And you can have confidence in your Savior. And if you're professing faith in Christ tonight, and you're looking at yourself and you see some fruit there by the grace of God, but you're longing for more and you feel your inability to produce that fruit, run to Christ.

[40 : 13] My advice for you is the same tonight. Believer or unbeliever tonight alike, run to Christ. Christ. And there find help. And there find grace. You can't do it on your own.

You call out and beg Him for help. And cast yourself wholly and completely upon Him. But know that at the same time, it is your duty to be producing fruit. And so, a word of advice.

If what comes out of the heart is what shows forth in our life, what should you be putting into your heart? Listen to Philippians 4.8. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent or praiseworthy, think about such things.

If what comes out of your heart is what shows forth in your life, then you ought to guard your heart very carefully as to what goes in there. That's the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

You ought not be filling it with the things of the world. And filling your mind and your eyes and your ears with all sorts of garbage and trash. No, be thinking on things that are right and pure and lovely and admirable and excellent and praiseworthy.

[41 : 25] And guess what will start coming out? Things that are right and true and admirable and excellent and praiseworthy. Be storing up treasure in heaven.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. If you're consumed again with the things that this earth has to offer and accumulating things, then that's what your heart's going to be consumed with and concerned with.

And that's what your actions will reflect. But if you're laying up treasure in heaven, if that is your great goal, your longing to be there, then that's where your heart will be. And that's what will come out in your actions.

A desire to live for Christ as you head towards glory. Let us thank God tonight who gave us His Son, who produced this Son, this Jesus, who when He walked on this earth only ever produced good fruit.

Never a rotten apple. Never an angry word. Never an impure thought. Nothing. But only good fruit in this Jesus. And it's our blessing to put on Christ. We heard about it last Sunday night.

[42 : 25] We've put off the old man and we've put on Christ. The close of the day. We're done with those old things. Be done with them. Leave them behind. No more rotten fruit for you. You've put on Christ.

Then He gives you a Spirit to dwell in you and to help you walk on your way to glory. That you might produce good fruit. That when other people look at you, they might say, that's a banana tree. That's so obvious to me.

That person is a follower of Christ. It's unmistakable because of the fruit in their life. Pray that God would make it so in your heart. Even as I pray that He would make it so in my heart.

May God give us grace to do this.