

TOPIC : FRUITFULNESS

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Message Summary

Daniel 5:24-26; 30

Belshazzar made a great feast for his lords. He drank from the vessels that were taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem. He had no regard for the things of God. The writings appeared on the wall. He was found wanting.

Message for us to take heed is this - knowing that we will all be weighed. There is a day of accountability for how we live our lives. Therefore watch and pray. Get ready for the Lord's coming.

How to be fruitful and be a spiritual heavy weight for the Lord?

1. Know that as a child of God we have right standing with God always.

Romans 5:17b

Much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

When we receive Jesus, we receive the gift of righteousness. There is nothing we can do. It's a gift to be received.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

We declare we are the righteousness of God. We come confidently by the Blood of the Lamb as Jesus is the great High Priest. Hence, we need to get off the performance treadmill mindset:

- a) Our prayers and reading of the bible cannot earn the grace, favor or the presence of God. The favor and grace of God cannot be earned. It is unmerited.
- b) We pray and read the Word for the purpose of strengthening our relationship with God.
- c) We serve Him because we are grateful and we serve out of a love for Him.
- d) This is the foundation of Jesus Christ in our lives - our salvation is by grace through faith.

1 Corinthians 3:11

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

2. We are called to be fruitful in our roles and responsibilities in life as a:

- son - daughter - engineer - uncle
- brother - husband - sister - mother
- father - nurse - boss - cousin
- teacher - supervisor - aunt - wife
- leader - taxi driver - colleague - cleaner
- employer - student - worker - neighbor, etc

a) Bearing Fruit

John 15:16

You did not choose Me but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your **fruit** should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

b) More Fruit

John 15:2

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes, that it may bear **more fruit**.

c) Much Fruit

John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me and I in him bears **much fruit** for without Me you can do nothing.

God wants us to produce more fruit and then to producing much fruit. 'Much' means it cannot be counted.

d) Fruit that will remain

John 15:16b

... and that your fruit should remain that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

We are not going by sight, touch and go. The 70-89 years we live will have an impact on our eternity. We know the love of God. We need also to know the severity of God.

3. God wants us to be fruitful in two major areas in our lives:

a) Christ-likeness

Romans 8:29

For whom He foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

We can do a simple exercise. Have 3 columns drawn up on a sheet of paper. At the first column, indicate the fruit of the Spirit. For the second column, indicate the people who cause us to lose the fruit and lastly, the circumstances in which it happens.

Fruit of the Spirit	People who cause us to lose the fruit	Circumstances at time of incident
e.g.: gentleness	This trait lost. Was not gentle towards Xenoline last Wed.	She said things that were not so nice for the hearing.

Another definition for Christ-likeness is love.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered. It keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

Similarly draw up three columns.

Characteristics of love	People who cause us to lose the characteristic	Circumstances at time of incident
e.g.: Does not keep record of wrongs	Xenoline.	Last Wed, she was late again and she kept me waiting for her for half an hour. This is her 3 rd time.

We don't have to talk someone down to bring ourselves up. Do we rejoice with the truth? How do we go along this journey? It's having Him to prune us. It's about having reflection and taking solitude to rebuild and repair.

John 15:2

Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

Pruning involves fresh consecration. It is about holiness; separating ourselves from things that wear us down to things that build. What was permissible last year is not permissible in the new year, e.g. Parking in the BBTC carpark. The car park is meant for visitors, elderly or the handicapped. We might have our rights to it but this year, let's not fight for our rights but give up the car parking lot to those who need it more. That's Christ-likeness.

We are works in progress. As we grow, we must increasingly be a blessing and a joy. We must engage one another to serve. We cannot come to the point till we are perfect to serve. We are all imperfect people.

b) Good works**Ephesians 2:10**

For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Hebrews 13:16

But do not forget to do good and to share for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

This is one sacrifice to bring in the physical realm. Let's learn to do good and be generous e.g. We can buy a container of goodies for the relatively poorer family in our cell, community or amongst relatives we know. We can do other forms of good works. Why?

Matthew 5:16

Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Luke 4:18

The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed.

In this church, our philosophy of ministry is to bond and then to build. We don't have to wait till someone is in critical condition and then have a pastor called to share the gospel. They wouldn't be ready for that. We have to build relationship while they are alive and let them get familiar with believers. We meet their felt needs, fellowship, connect and earn the right to share the gospel.

4. Fruitfulness - becoming like Christ and doing good are works

- a) Our works must still depend on the grace of God. We begin with grace, we continue in grace.

Eugene Peterson, writer of "Message" shared about an incident where after he had delivered a sermon, someone came over to tell him that it was a great sermon. However, the person continued to say now that the service was over, he would go back to the real world to make money. Here's someone who marginalises God, prayer and pushes spiritual things away. His real world is the world out there. Know that our spirituality is the real world.

- b) Works involve energy, effort, time and strength.
- c) Our works will be judged.
- d) Works determine rewards or losses.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he had done whether good or bad.

1 Corinthians 3:11-15

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear, for the Day will declare it because it will be revealed by fire and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Our work, our journey, if they endure, will turn up as gold, silver or precious stones. We will receive rewards but wood, hay and straw will burn and we will suffer loss. What are these lessons?

In Matthew 8, it talks about the sons of the kingdom being cast into outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Perish the idea of just getting a passport to heaven. Don't be too sure. Let him who stand take heed lest he falls. Those who lose their salvation are not at the place where there is gnashing of teeth or utter darkness but the lake of fire. There is a consequence following how we live our lives. In view of the judgment, let's decide to be intentional to present our lives pleasing to God.

2 Corinthians 5:9-11

Therefore we make it our aim whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men but we are well known to God and I also trust we are well known in your consciences.

Why fear God?

Because at the judgment seat, Jesus is no longer our Saviour. Jesus was the Lamb slain for us. Today, the cross is finished. He was the Lamb of God. He is the Son of God coming back as King of kings and Lord of Lords and as the Judge. In view of this, we are to present ourselves to the Lord. He knows who we are, our going out and coming in, our conscience telling us what is right or wrong. Do what's right. If we've got a grudge against someone, settle it.

James 4:17

Therefore to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.

Don't believe every word that preachers preach but if what is being preached has our inward witness, then we better take heed.

Colossians 3:23-24

And whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

Those who think they have a passport, look at this verse. Inheritance is a reward. Not everyone will receive a full inheritance. They will suffer losses. Instead of joy, they will receive shame.

5. Our good works, in and of itself, will have its outcome in salvation, deliverance, healings and blessings on the recipients

Romans 1:16

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jews first and also for the Greek.

There is inherent power in the name of Jesus when we pray for others, assuming all other issues are cleared. However, the person who ministers will himself be judged for their own lives and how they live. Their ministry may still result in salvation or healing regardless of how horrible the ministers themselves might be. They are just delivery boys. The outcome will take its place but the messenger will himself be judged. The outcome is in according to the inherent power of the name and Word of God. E.g. Moses. Water came forth when he struck the rock but he paid a heavy price. He didn't honor and obey God. He couldn't enter the Promised Land. Look at Matthew 7.

Matthew 7:22

Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?"

If we are not walking with God and instead are practising lawlessness, there are consequences.

6. Sow and Reap for a harvest of fruitfulness

- a) Seed-time and harvest is a principle of life on this earth (Genesis 8:22)
- b) We will always reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7)
- c) Only the good ground produces fruit (Mark 4)
- d) You always reap more than you sow
- e) You must sow seed according to the desired harvest

What kind of harvest do we desire? It is not enough just to be attending church. We need to be plugged to a cell. The challenge is when we meet people and grow in the midst of challenges

- f) The amount of harvest is proportional to the amount of sowing (2 Corinthians 9:6)
- g) We can sow in all kinds of season, even in famine (Genesis 26:12)
- h) We do not live by the world's system or ways; we live by kingdom principles.
- i) We can appropriate every promise of God by faith (Romans 5:2)
- j) Purge our lives from anything not in line with God's kingdom values.
 - i) Bad seed of gossip and slander.
 - ii) Water the good seed for the desired harvest. Live with clean hands and pure hearts.

7. Towards Greater Fruitfulness

- a) Priestly anointing to minister to God.
- b) Prophetic anointing to minister to the Body of Christ.
- c) Kingly anointing to minister to pre-believers.

If the Lord is coming back very soon, how shall you live?

End.

- 5) How about doing something practical. Think of a characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit and fill up the columns. Thereafter, pray for the person who hurt you and also for yourself to grow in the specific characteristic.

Fruit of the Spirit / love	People who cause us to lose the fruit / characteristic of love	Circumstances at time of incident

- 6) We will always reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7).
 What kind of desired harvest would you want to sow intentionally?
 What are some steps you would take?

- 7) If you know the Lord is coming back very soon, how will you live?