

**Sermon Series:** “Living Lives of Irresistible Influence” — Lord of Life, Westfield, IN – 6/15/08

**Title:** “A Life of Producing”

**Text:** John 15: 5

**Intro.:** *Ills.: Seeds of the Spirit*

**Theme:** Jesus has come into our lives to save us so that we might do more than live lives that just get by; rather that we would be so transformed by him that our lives of good works would attract and lead others to him.

***By your fruits you will be known*** (Print John 15: 5 and 8)

- *By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.*  
*Matt 7:16-20*
- Pruning what does not lead to production
  1. So that it does not lead to destruction
  2. **Ills.: Grape vine pruning techniques (Indy Star article)**
  3. *If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. vs. 6*
  4. Twice this passage shows us Jesus’ expectations and assumptions of his redeeming of our lives– “**bear much fruit**”
- Cultivating the conditions which will lead to a producing faith
  1. **Ills.: Pick the fruit and burn the rest**
  2. Surrender to his abiding presence (vs. 5)
    - a. Involves repentance of unproductive thoughts/words/action
    - b. *Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. Matt3:8*
  3. Making a home in his Word (*If you remain in me and my words remain in you . . . vs. 7*)
    - a. *Jesus said, "If you dwell in my Word, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8: 31-32*
    - b. What are you intentionally doing with the manual on **faith-full fruit production?**
    4. Setting your goal to bring attention and glory to the Father
      - a. Jesus made this goal (*"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work. John 4:34*)
      - b. No higher purpose for schooling, career, parenting, marriage, than to make it pleasing to God (*So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 2 Cor. 5:9*)
      - c. Seeing your life as tending “the vineyard which God has given you to manage in your life”

***Bearing fruit: A Promise and a Command*** (Print John 15: 7, 8a)

- Notice that the promise comes first
  1. We are not called upon to produce the fruit, but simply to bear it. **Roy Hession in The Calvary Road.**
  2. Legalism or guilt never motivates us or others to respond or live for Christ
    - a. *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 2 Cor. 3:17*
    - b. Being careful how we parent children, motivate our spouse, govern fellow believers, manage coworkers
    - c. God wants us to be accountable to him but not bullied by fear
    - d. *There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1 John 4:18*
- The promise of God is to resource whatever it takes to help us to produce
  1. God says, “Ask for whatever you need to produce, and I will give it.” vs. 7a
  2. Sometimes, “we have not because we do not ask.” James 4:2
  3. Even when we do not know how to ask, God gives us his Spirit within to do it for us (Rom 8:26-27)
  4. When we come in Jesus’ name, in submission to his will, he stands ready to respond (1 John 5: 14)
- God commands what he has already enabled you to do
  1. **Ills.: Backup fruitfulness**
  2. **To bear fruits of the Spirit** (*love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control ... against such things there is no law. Gal 5: 22-23*) (so actively work on practicing each)
  3. **To bear the fruit of righteousness** (*Discern what is best and is pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ. Phil 1: 10-11*) (refusing to dumb life down)
  4. **To bear the fruit of discipleship** (*Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13: 34-35* )

### **Seeds of the Spirit**

In the book *The Ascent of a Leader*, Bruce McNicol and Bill Thrall tell of a woman who has a dream where she wanders into a shop at the mall and finds Jesus behind a counter. Jesus says, "You can have anything your heart desires." Astounded but pleased, she asks for peace, joy, happiness, wisdom, and freedom from fear. Then she adds, "Not just for me, but for the whole earth." Jesus smiles and says, "I think you misunderstand me. We don't sell fruits, only seeds." **Bruce McNicol and Bill Thrall, *The Ascent of a Leader* (Jossey Bass, 1999); submitted by Marshall Shelley**

### **Pick the fruit and burn the rest**

Years ago a thunderstorm came through southern Kentucky at the farm where my Claypool forebears have lived for six generations. In the orchard, the wind blew over an old pear tree that had been there as long as anybody could remember. The story is that my grandfather was really grieved to lose the tree where he had climbed as a boy and whose fruit he had eaten all his life. A neighbor came by and said, "Doc, I'm really sorry to see your pear tree blown down." My grandfather said, "I'm sorry too, it was a real part of my past." The neighbor said, "What are you going to do?" My grandfather paused for a long moment and then said, "I'm going to pick the fruit and burn what's left." That's such a wise way of working with the past. We do need to pick its fruit. We do need to learn its lessons. Amnesia is a sickness and not an asset. But having learned what the past can teach us, we need to pick the fruit, burn what's left, and go on. **John Claypool, "The Future and Forgetting," *Preaching Today*, Tape No. 109.**

### **Bearing not Producing**

We are not called upon to produce the fruit, but simply to bear it. **Roy Hession in *The Calvary Road*. *Christianity Today*, Vol. 33, no. 13**

### **Backup fruitfulness**

I learned a remarkable fact about the cocklebur: its sticky seed pod contains several seeds, not just one. And these seeds germinate in different years. Thus, if seed A fails to sprout next year because of a drought, seed B will be there waiting for year after next, and seed C the year after that, waiting until the right conditions for germination arrive. **Graham R. Hodges in *Leadership*, Vol. 9, no. 4.**

### **John 15:5-8**

"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. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. <sup>8</sup>This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. [NIV]