

Fruit Bearing and Stewardship

Buster Brown, East Cooper Baptist Church, January 14, 2018

"On the following day, when they came from Bethany, he was hungry. And seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to see if he could find anything on it. When he came to it, he found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. And he said to it, 'May no one ever eat fruit from you again.' And his disciples heard it. And they came to Jerusalem. And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. And he was teaching them and saying to them, 'Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? But you have made it a den of robbers." And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching. And when evening came they went out of the city. As they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig tree withered away to its roots. And Peter remembered and said to him, 'Rabbi, look! The fig tree that you cursed has withered.'" Mark 11:12-21

A steward is one who manages the resources of another for a specific period.

"Therefore it is impossible that this holy faith can be unfruitful in man: for we do not speak of a vain faith, but of such a faith, which is called in Scripture, a faith that worketh by love, which excites man to the practice of those works, which God has commanded in his Word. Which works, as they proceed from the good root of faith, are good and acceptable in the sight of God, forasmuch as they are all sanctified by his grace: howbeit they are of no account towards our justification."
Belgic Confession (1561), Man's Santification & Good Works, Article 24

"These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith: and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the Gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto, that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life."
Westminster Confession of Faith (1647), XVI. Of Good Works

Fruit bearing: not optional (1 Corinthians 6:19-20, Romans 6:20-23, Hebrews 6:7-8, John 15:16)

Fruit bearing: linked to joy awakening worship.

The disciple of Christ and fruit bearing:

1. The power of our union with Christ:

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5

"Now the Lord[a] is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,[b] are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. [c] For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

2. **The result of our union with Christ:**

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." **Ephesians 2:10**

"For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned." **Hebrews 6:7-8**

"By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples." **John 15:8**

3. **Good works/ fruit bearing and assurance (and joy) of salvation**

4. **Good works and gospel communication**

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." **Matthew 5:16**

"So that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior." **Titus 2:10b**

"Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation." **1 Peter 2:12**

5. **Fruit bearing / productive living and thankfulness**

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." **1 Peter 2:9**

Questions for discussion:

Why is knowledge of self/ family history/ culture important in growth in Christ (fruit bearing)?

What is progressive sanctification? (2 Peter 3:18,
1 Thessalonians 5:23, 2 Corinthians 3:18)

What is the "Abraham challenge"?

"And God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall be her name. I will bless her, and moreover, I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall become nations; kings of peoples shall come from her." Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed and said to himself, "Shall a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?" **Genesis 17:15-17**