

bear good fruits and those who bear bad fruits, then gave the “Lord, Lord,” section, before finishing on the wise man and foolish man and their foundations based on how they responded to His words. To sum up, those on the narrow path will be those who bear good fruits, those who do the Father’s will, and those who hear Jesus’ words and obey.

Of these points, I want to focus most on the bad and good fruits, as that’s a concept that shows up repeatedly in the Gospels. Before Jesus began His ministry, John was preaching a message of repentance and told people to bear fruits in keeping with repentance (Matthew 3, Luke 3). He told the tax collectors to be honest in their collection, the soldiers to avoid using their power corruptly, and the general populace to give of what they had to those in need. In other words, don’t just say you’ve repented. Let your life show it. In John 15, Jesus told the disciples that if they abided in Him, they would bear much fruit, but if they didn’t bear fruit they would be cut away and thrown into the fire. This fiery judgment for non-fruit bearing branches is a theme that pops up in each of these passages. Jesus expects to see tangible results, and if they aren’t there, the branch goes into the incinerator.

So, who will be the kind of person who gets turned away by Jesus? The kind of person who says they know Him but shows little evidence that they do.

The third, and final step, is to stop relying on our own works at all.

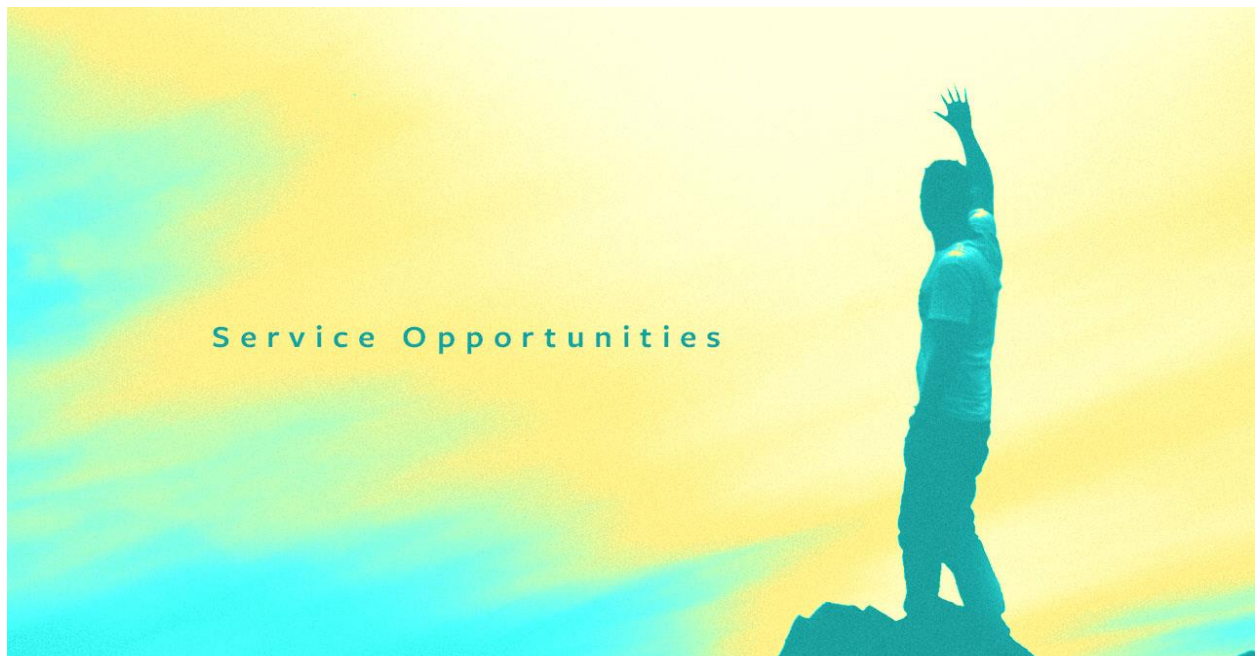
That’s the thing about fruit – it’s not an action. It’s a result. Fruit appears on a tree as an outward result of all the good things happening inside the tree. With the proper sunlight and feeding, a fruit tree will naturally produce fruit. So, when Jesus puts such a high premium on bearing fruits, He’s not telling you to try really hard and maybe it’ll be good enough. He’s saying that if you walk with Him and abide in Him, your life will naturally show it. Notice those whom He will turn away will be told “I never knew you.” Who is the kind of person who produces fruit? The kind of person who knows Jesus, and He knows them.

That’s the beauty of a Gospel that is not based on salvation by works. Even though passages like Matthew 7:21-23 should make us sit up straight and pay attention, they don’t mean we have to walk around in constant fear of what He’s going to say to us at the Judgment. We can know we are saved (1 John 5:13), and it’s not because of ourselves. It’s because of Him, and the proof we have is the fruit He is producing in our lives.

That leaves the question to you: does your life show the kind of fruit that proves you know Jesus? What will you point to when you stand before Him on that day? Will you point to your own goodness, your own doctrinal correctness, your own works? Or will you point to the cross, and to the fruit that Jesus brought about in your life? Will He say “I never knew you?” Or will it be like meeting a faithful long distance friend after years of waiting to see each other?

In either case, you can know. Don’t get surprised at the Judgment.

The elders are considering starting our Bible classes in the building in September. Jeff Thompson needs several teachers for the younger ages to volunteer to help. Call him at 903-718-1450 or email him at jeffcamillet@hotmail.com.



Also, the need for acts of kindness in our community is growing. The pantry continues to supply groceries for 30 families. It takes about \$50.00 per family. We also are helping with some construction to provide shelter. This is in addition to several financial payments to keep water and electricity on for some of our residents. We are doing as much as we can, but we need monetary gifts for these benevolent efforts to continue. If you want to give above your regular contribution, please make checks out to Collinsville Church of Christ and put in the memo section what the check is for. May God bless your generous hearts.